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FREE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

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Freedom to Marry Week - PENNSYLVANIA

By Bolton Winpenny
Steering Committee
Freedom to Marry, PA

Thousands of Pennsylvania citizens form loving, monogamous, life-long bonds with people of the same gender. During most of Pennsylvania's history these relationships were scorned, forcing gays and lesbians to either deny their love and happiness, or live the most profound aspects of their lives in secret. In recent decades our state and country have started to bloom with acceptance and equality, allowing same-gender couples to live freely.

In 1993, one such Hawaiian couple decided to celebrate their relationship in the same way as their heterosexual counterparts and sought to acquire the social recognition and civil benefits provided to married couples. These benefits are designed to recognize them as a single unit with a shared budget. When the bread winner passes away, the spouse that took care of their home and family needs to be cared for in senior years. Health benefits provided to one partner should cover the other, since all their concerns, including health, family and money, are the same as within any marriage. While Hawaiian officials studied the possibility and ramifications of a same-gender marriage a panic set about the country.

Legislators feared Article IV of the U.S. Constitution, which instructs states to recognize the laws of other states. Few people related same-gender marriage with other existing conflicts that arise when the definition of marriage between states do not match, as is the case with marriage between people under the age of 18, or marriage between first cousins. The American Law Institute published The Reinstatement of Conflicts to resolve such conflicts, part of a series of Reinstatement of Law publications, which is widely recognized and used in civil court cases. Congressmen read the second sentence of Article IV, which indicates they could clarify the constitutional conflict by writing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which designates that states do not need to recognize marriages of other states.

DOMA, the 1996 federal law went one step too far and defined marriage on a Federal level as between one man and one woman. This law ignored the state authority to define marriage, so even when a state, such as Massachusetts, defines marriage as they see fit, the Federal government ignores some of the state's married couples, while recognizing others.

The same year the federal DOMA was enacted Pennsylvania followed suit with its own version of a DOMA law, defining marriage as one man and one woman. Federal and state DOMA laws were put in place to stabilize the status quo, although education, discussion, and awareness continue. More and more LGBT people come out of the closet to friends, family and co-workers and live with their partners in the same way as heterosexual couples. Their united voices continue to demand, louder and clearer, for equality, including state and federal recognition of same-gender marriages. DOMA laws will prove to be a temporary step and may well some day soon be thought of as merely growing pains of an advancing civilization.

For the past five years, during the week prior to Valentine's Day, Harrisburg has joined lgbt activism by demonstrating in front of the Dauphin County Courthouse, where same-gender couples are denied marriage licenses. This year, the single day event has been expanded into many events crossing several weeks.

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Lily the Legend

By Larry Nichols
Gay History Project

In her long and fruitful career, there isn't much that Lily Tomlin hasn't done. Over the last 50-plus years, the out entertainer has used her unique charm to make her mark in comedy, television, film, Broadway and, starting next month, Las Vegas.

Last October in Newark and Atlantic City Tomlin gave what amounts to her greatest-hits performance featuring some of the most memorable and lovable characters she's created.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Tomlin, 70, grew up in a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Detroit and said that she was inspired to be a performer by (and admits to lifting routines from) some of the great women in entertainment of the day such as Lucille Ball, Bea Lillie, Imogene Coca, Joan Davis and Jean Carroll, one of the first female stand-ups on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

"Imogene Coca, I liked her at the time because she did accents and she would do mock ballet dances," Tomlin said. "She even did a strip tease once that I took right off the TV and did on my back porch. She'd have on an overcoat and then she's go behind a curtain and throw the overcoat out. And then she'd jump out and have on another overcoat. I thought that was hilari-

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Down for the count
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More than black & white
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MISS CLUB XS PAGEANT

- **Enter now for a chance to be Miss Club XS 2010!**
- **Deadline for entering is Sunday, January 17th.**
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Common Roads and Club XS present

Winter hearts Ball

SATURDAY, FEB 20TH

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STARRING KACI BATTAGLIA

Suspect Arrested; Equality Forum Calls for Investigation

Puerto Rican authorities announced they have charged a local man with first-degree murder and four other counts in connection with Jorge Steven López Mercado's gruesome death near Cayey last November.

Puerto Rican authorities have agreed to investigate Jorge Steven López Mercado's murder as a hate crime after they met with local representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union.

More than a thousand people marched through the streets of San Juan to pay tribute to Mercado and to demand an end to hate crimes. "Today a new Puerto Rico that is not going to tolerate any anti-gay hate crimes is born," Pedro Julio Serrano of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force said reported Nuevo Dia. "The voices of intolerance are realizing their hateful discourse does not resonate with the public."

Nov. 14, the body of 19-year-old George Lopez Mercado was found by the side of the road in Cayey, a city near the victim's hometown of Caguas, Puerto Rico. Lopez Mercado was partially burned, decapitated and with both arms and legs

George Lopez Mercado

dismembered from his torso.

The police investigator suggested that Lopez Mercado deserved what he got because of the "type of lifestyle" he was leading. According to Puerto Rican activists, Puerto Rico has never classified the murder of a gay man as a hate crime.
week.

Police maintain Juan A. Martínez Matos killed López after he discovered the teenager, whom he had thought was a female prostitute he had solicited on a Caguas street, was actually a man. Investigators further allege Matos decapitated and dismembered López before he burned his body and left it in a wooded area near his parents' apartment.

Matos has reportedly confessed to the murder, and he plans to use a "gay panic" defense. A judge will arraign Matos in a Caguas court in the morning, but Puerto Rican investigators have not decided whether to apply the Commonwealth's hate crime statute, which includes sexual orientation.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has indicated Matos may face federal hate crimes charges if local authorities fail to indict him under the Puerto Rican law.

"Equality Forum calls on US Attorney General Eric Holder to have the FBI investigate," stated Malcolm Lazin, Executive Director, Equality Forum. "The Matthew Shepard Amendment empowers and requires the federal government to prosecute this horrific murder."

Lazin served as a federal prosecutor; received the US Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award, the department's highest annual honor; and was the Chair of the Pennsylvania Crime Commission.

The Matthew Shepard Amendment to the federal hate crimes act includes among other protected categories, sexual orientation. President Obama signed the bill into law on October 28, 2009. The federal hate crimes act enables federal agents to investigate hate crimes, especially where there does not appear that a full and fair investigation will be undertaken.

Puerto Rican gay activist Pedro Julio Serrano stated, "It is inconceivable that the investigating officer suggests that the victim deserved his fate, like a woman deserves rape for wearing a short skirt."

"Equality Forum joins Puerto Rican activists in condemning the statements of the investigator and calls on Police Superintendent Figueroa Sancha to terminate the officer," stated Malcolm Lazin. "It is clear that without federal intervention, there can be no fair and complete investigation."

FBI Reports Rise in Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes

Annual statistics for 2008 collected by local law enforcement agencies nationwide show an 11 percent increase in hate crimes based on sexual orientation, according to a report released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

While the overall number of hate crimes of any kind grew by about 2 percent from 2007 to 2008, the 11 percent hike in anti-gay incidents, and a 9 percent increase in hate crimes based on religion, demonstrate the continuing danger posed by bias against others based on their differences.

The FBI report shows 7,783 hate crimes voluntarily reported to the agency by participating law enforcement agencies, involving a total of 9,691 victims. A majority (58 percent) of the 1,706 victims targeted for their sexual orientation were gay men.

Roughly a third of the cases were physical attacks, another third were intimidation and the remaining third were vandalism or property damage.

The FBI cautioned that year-to-year comparisons are difficult due to the change in the number of law enforcement agencies which chose to participate. The number of participating agencies rose by 449, or 3.4 percent, versus the prior year.

"While it is important to respect the cautions voiced by statistical analysts, the continuing, steady emergence of extremely violent anti-LGBT hate crimes in recent weeks also argues in favor of taking the increase seriously and redoubling prevention efforts," said Jason Marsden, executive director of the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

Just in the prior week, authorities announced they were investigating the murder of Jorge Lopez in Puerto Rico as a hate crime, and a 16-year-old gay Houston high school student reported being assaulted with a metal pipe by a group of assailants despite having sought help from school administrators ahead of time due to rumors circulating about the planned attack. These are only two of the several anti-gay attacks reported in recent months, many of which have not been covered by mainstream media outlets.

"Coming just weeks after President Obama signed new, LGBT-inclusive hate crimes provisions, the rise in reported hate crimes against the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community is sobering, whether due to increased reporting or increased frequency of the crimes, or both," Marsden said. "We all must do more to send the message that these attacks are unacceptable."

Central PA Gay & Lesbian Chamber to Hold Annual Meeting

The Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce will hold their 3rd Annual Meeting and Dinner at the historic Hamilton Club Thurs., Jan. 21, 6 p.m.

The Hamilton Club is located at 106 East Orange Street in downtown Lancaster.

The chamber will highlight accomplishments for 2009, as memberships - both individual and business - have dramatically improved. The National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce will also be sending Kate Karasmeighan, chief of staff and director of affiliate relations, to speak at the event.

Music will be provided by local pianist Anthony Haubert. Sponsorships for this event are welcome. Members and non-members must register for the event by Fri., Jan. 8. Cost is $40 for members and $50 for non-members . Payment must be accompanied by a registration form. Registration and sponsorship forms are available at www.cpglcc.org.

find more community voice on pages 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 14, 23, 33

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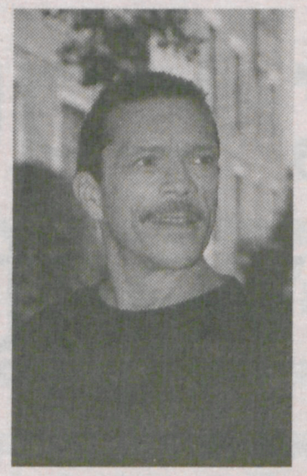
publisher's note

Resolve to Touch Our Community



Frank Pizzoli

Customs are funny.

At the National Basque Olympics they sometimes chant ancient war cries, hoist huge lead balls, and drag monstrous slabs of cement long distances. We have New Year's Resolutions.

In spite of harsh headlines against same-sex marriage, the US Catholic Church threatening to withdraw funds from social services in our nation's capital (funds that are often derived from our tax dollars), we've come a long way baby. The Kingdom ain't come yet, but no oppressed group is inert.

Huge numbers of 20-30-somethings don't even want to hear about discrimination against lgbt folk, or anyone for that matter. They just don't get it and that's a sign of organic progress, not a legislated advance.

Yet, there remains lots of work for each segment of our own community to do - with each other. Needed change isn't always the other guy's chore. Our rates of alcohol and drug abuse are staggering when compared to the general population. We smoke like chimneys.

Young gay men of all colors seem to think HIV is no big deal. "If I get it, there's medicines." Yes, there are but there's no guarantee they'll be available to you in your employer's health (if your employer has a health plan) or through a public program (If you can gain access to a program.).

In 2004, there were 1,629 people on waiting lists for HIV drugs. Some died before getting them. Now the waiting list has increased over 800% since January, 2009. At press time, this means the quickening rate of growth could push the waiting list to 500 by New Year's Day.

There are 342 total individuals in nine states on waiting lists as you read this note. Another 12 states are expected to restrict access to HIV medicines by April 1, 2010. Some April Fool's Day joke, huh? Use a condom and lube, okay? Try talking to a guy who's lived with HIV for many years. They're out there. Learn first hand that this virus is more than "I'll take those pills and be okay."

Think about stopping or slowing down on smoking. Don't look the other way when a buddy wants to drive home drunk after a long night of partying. Make a resolution for 2010 to touch our own community in some small way. Join a club. Make a donation. Attend an event.

Sierra Club Lauds Commission on Marcellus Gas

The Pennsylvania Sierra Club applauds the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC) efforts to ensure compliance with environmental rules in the Marcellus gas fields.

Late last year the commission began temporarily diverting some law enforcement and field biologist staff to inspect 150 Marcellus Shale gas drilling sites. The club hailed the commission's plans as a badly needed stopgap measure for improving oversight and enforcement of the rapidly expanding Marcellus Shale gas industry.

"Since the Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies have been severely cut in the budget process, environmental organizations are concerned about DEP's ability to provide for compliance with environmental regulations," said Thomas Au, the club's Conservation Committee chair. "Given the recently announced furlough of employees at DEP, these concerns have greatly magnified. We applaud the Commission's decision to do what it can to address this situation, even if only temporarily," continued Au.

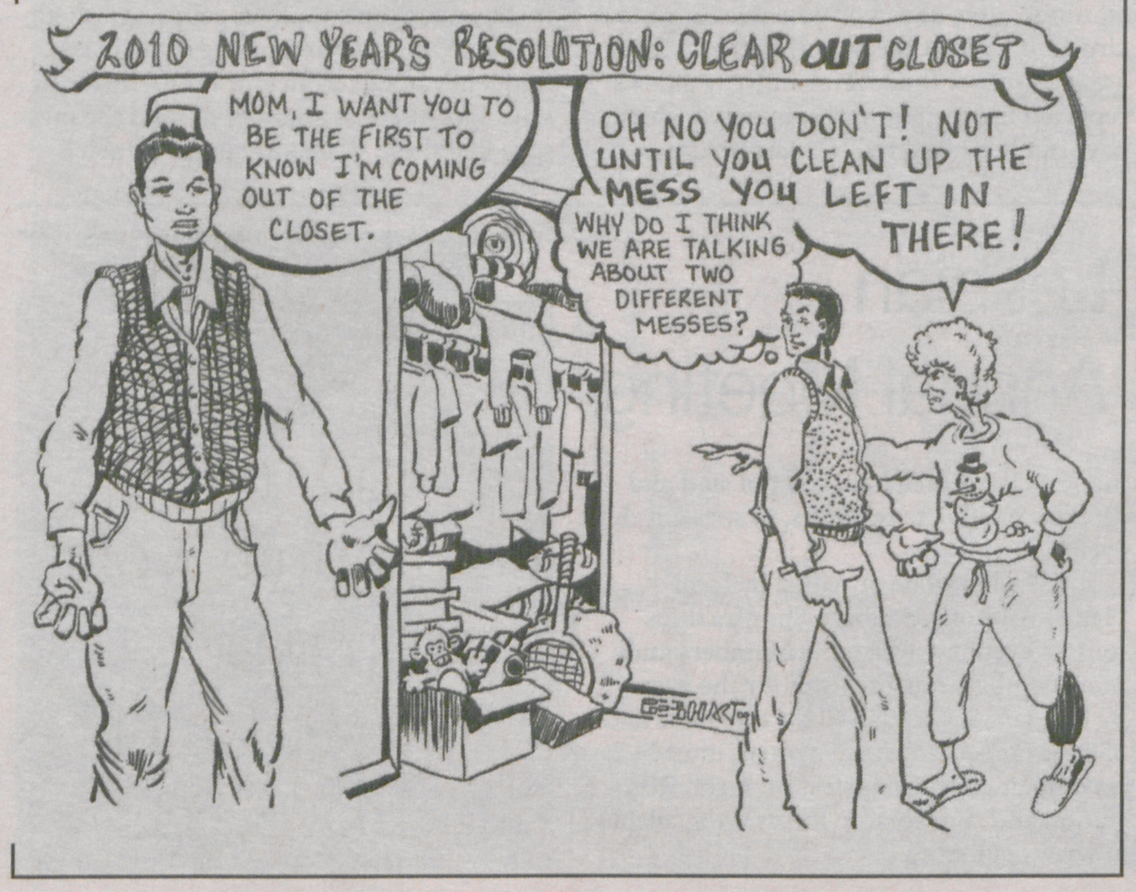
"We call on the Commission, DEP and the county conservation districts to work together so that this effort is well coordinated among the responsible agencies. We also call on all the players to do their best over the coming months to transition this effort into a permanent, sustainable partnership that provides maximum enforcement and environmental protection," Au concluded.

The large industrial sites created by Marcellus Shale gas drilling are appearing at an alarming rate in North-central, Southwestern and Northeast Pennsylvania. Local citizens and conservation organizations across the commonwealth are alarmed by the regulatory and enforcement vacuum that exists. The state's oil and gas laws were developed years ago for a shallow-drilling gas industry.

The recent boom in the construction of the large, deep well drilling sites used for Marcellus Shale gas production has caught the state's regulators unprepared for the massive increase in the needs for permit review, inspection, and regulatory enforcement.

There have been an increasing number of reports of spills and contamination of streams and water wells. Residents near some Marcellus sites have lost the use of their water wells due to contamination, forcing them to pay the high costs of buying water to use for drinking, cooking, bathing and laundry. To make matters worse, deep Marcellus well operations require the use, storage and waste treatment of millions of gallons of water per well. In a process commonly referred to as "fracking," water is pumped underground with a toxic mixture of chemicals, under high pressure, to fracture the deep shale rock and release the vast amounts of gas trapped inside the rock. Wastewater pumped back out of the well is contaminated with fracking chemicals and brines, heavy metals, and acids picked up from the rock formations underground. Pennsylvania currently has no industrial wastewater treatment plants designed to decontaminate wastewater from this new, rapidly growing industry.

The Sierra club has 25,000 Pennsylvania members.



Please Don't Spread Swine Flu

By Dr. Stephen Ostroff
Acting Physician General
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The new year is well underway, and as expected, so are more cases of novel A/H1N1 in schools around the state. Wherever children come together, there are opportunities to spread this flu virus. But you - parents, students and school staff members - can help reduce the spread of this disease.

The Department of Health strongly recommends children with influenza-like illness stay home until 24 hours after their fever leaves without the use of fever reducing medication. The same applies to teachers and staff. When you are sick, the best place to be is home.

We encourage parents to plan in advance in case their children have to stay home from school or their child's school closes for a period of time. Talk to your employer now about whether or not you're allowed to work from home or whether you have sick time that can be used.

As the Acting Physician General, I also strongly recommend that you vaccinate your children against seasonal flu and as the novel A/H1N1 vaccine now begins to become available, your child should receive this vaccine too. Vaccines do not guarantee they won't get the flu, but they are the best preventive measure available.

Symptoms of the new influenza virus are similar to those of regular or seasonal flu and include sudden fever and cough with muscle aches, fatigue and lack of appetite. Many people with this infection also have runny nose, sore throat and watery eyes, and some also have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Always remember the flu is contagious to others. So, in addition to staying home when you are sick, other ways to avoid spreading illness include:

1. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands.

2. Avoid touching your face especially your eyes, nose and mouth.

3. Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

4. Keep frequently used surfaces clean.

5. Stay at home if you are sick.

6. When the H1N1 vaccination becomes available, talk with your health care provider about you and your child getting one.

If all of us do our part and practice these simple steps, we can help lessen the severity of pandemic influenza this season in the commonwealth. You can learn more about preventing the spread of the novel H1N1 virus by calling toll free at 1-877-PA-HEALTH or by visiting www.H1N1inPA.com.

Is It Time for a State Constitutional Convention?

Submitted by Common Cause/PA

At a recent capitol rotunda press conference The Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention Commission (comprised of Common Cause/PA, The Commonwealth Foundation, Democracy Rising/PA, and the League of Women Voters of PA) released its landmark study on constitutional conventions, The Citizen's Guide to a Modern Constitutional Convention.

In remarks framing the purpose of the study, Common Cause/PA Executive Director, Barry Kauffman, stated "Constitutions are important. They are contracts specifying the terms and conditions by which we the people permit our elected and appointed officials to govern us. They are the blueprints for our extraordinary experiment in self-government."

Since the middle of this decade there has been increasing discussion – both inside and outside the capitol -- about the possible need for a constitutional convention. These discussions have been driven by a variety of factors, including the increasing number and seriousness of government scandals, modern technology, increasing needs for cooperation among local governments and their conflicts with state government, increasing numbers and seriousness of governmental fiscal challenges, the lack of functional citizen-triggered safety valves in the governing process, and many more.

"The depth, breadth and interrelatedness of these concerns are leading many governmental observers to the conclusion that a piecemeal patchwork of amendments to the Pennsylvania constitution may not be working effectively, and the time may have arrived for a comprehensive review and upgrading of the state's supreme law' Kauffman noted. He indicated that all Commission members believe that despite their "sometimes divergent views on specific reforms required, we all agree the time has arrived for Pennsylvanians to improve the integrity and effectiveness of their government, and we need to begin a broad diverse statewide conversation about the kinds of state and local governments Pennsylvanians want, need and deserve."

While the report does not contain recommendations for specific governmental reforms, it does contain a set of "Observations" as to how citizens could be empowered to make reforms when needed, including:

Calling constitutional conventions via initiative and referendum;

Establishing the automatic call for a convention via mandatory periodic ballot questions;

Sending convention recommendations directly to voters without modification by the legislature or other governmental entity;

Requiring a two-part question on the ballot if the legislature calls a constitutional convention ballot question, inquiring first as to whether voters want to call a convention, and second if the voters accept the limitations set by the legislature;

Noting the value and importance of constitutional study commissions prior to embarking on a call for a convention; and

Setting a delegate selection process that strives to have convention delegates effectively represent the vast diversity of the Commonwealth's population.

The Commission formally assembled in 2005 because, despite increasing calls for a convention, no-one had thought through the processes and possibilities for developing, managing and responding to a modern constitutional convention. It seemed logical that such an exploration should be conducted prior to a constitutional convention being called.

The last full convention occurred in the early 1870s and the only one since then was a limited convention in the late 1960s. Over that time there have been seismic shifts in communication technology, large meeting management practices, and political thought that permit constitutional conventions to be more open, more inclusive, and more responsive to Pennsylvanians needs for quality government than ever before.

The goal of the Citizens Guide is to demonstrate a range of options for producing an effective and productive constitutional convention. The Commission hopes to conduct a major follow-up study that would examine the pros and cons of a wide range of specific government reforms.

Info: PA@commoncause.org; www.commoncause.org/pa. To view or download a copy of the full report: www.commoncause.org/pa/citizensguide4modernconconor call 717-232-9951 to obtain a copy.

The National Pratfall: March on Washington May Do More Harm Than Good

By Diane Silver

An LGBT march on Washington should be a great idea. It should energize the pro-equality community and rally the nation. It should move the president and push Congress into repealing all those laws that punish us for the "crimes" of living and loving while queer.

The Oct. 11 National Equality March, spearheaded by longtime activist Cleve Jones, should do all those things, but I fear it won't. Even worse, the event could damage the movement at a pivotal time.

That's because the march has a fatal flaw: It asks LGBT Americans and allies to waste time, money and energy traveling to Washington, D.C., when we need to stay home and organize in our own backyards.

This flaw is born from a fundamental misunderstanding of how change comes to the Capitol. D.C.-based lobbying is important, but true change only arrives via events that happen far outside the Beltway.

Here's the hard truth: No one wins a vote in the House of Representatives or the Senate until they've changed attitudes in places that are dozens, hundreds and thousands of miles from Capitol Hill. All the visits to Congress and all the rallies on the National Mall aren't half as important as what happens in Des Moines, Fresno, Baltimore, Dallas, Boston and hundreds of other places in the country.

Take the case of Democrat Nancy Pelosi. Why do you suppose the Speaker of the House is pro-lgbt? Is it because she is a saint who supports our cause even when her constituents don't? Not exactly.

Since 1987 Pelosi has represented the 8th District of California, which encompasses the Castro. Not only does her district include the highest number of same-sex couples in the nation, but it has also been the site of the most sustained lgbt organizing effort in history.

Beginning in the 1960s, continuing with Harvey Milk's campaigns, moving through AIDS activism and up to today, the 8th provides a model of how lgbt people can organize locally. These days an anti-LGBT politician could neither get elected nor stay in office in the California 8th.

Here's a political pop quiz.

Question: When will the Defense of Marriage Act, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on lesbians and gays in the military and other discriminatory laws be repealed?

Answer: When 219 members of the House and 60 senators realize that their constituents no longer support politicians who work against equality. Those numbers are the votes needed to pass legislation and send it to President Barack Obama for his signature.

Although march leaders say they intend to organize all 435 Congressional districts, pulling people out of their hometowns and sending them on a costly trip won't do that. If only 5,000 people attend the march and each one spends a mere $500 on travel expenses, this one event will burn through $2.5 million that could have been put into local organizing.

The cost is worrisome in the midst of a record-breaking recession. An upcoming vote on marriage equality in Maine and another possible vote in California also need all the financial support we can provide.

March organizers aren't villains, and they're not fools. I've long admired politico David Mixner, who first raised the possibility of a march; organizer Torie Osborn, former executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and Cleve Jones.

The California 8th wouldn't be what it is today without Jones. He also helped transform attitudes about AIDS and gave people a way to cope with the epidemic's emotional devastation by founding The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt.

On this project, though, I respectfully disagree with my three heroes.

Mixner blogged that "having matured into a full-fledged civil rights movement, it is essential that our community move outside its own comfort zone." If I'm reading him correctly, he's talking about the march and bringing straight friends and allies with us to D.C.

Once again, I respectfully disagree. I don't think that joining a anonymous crowd in a gay-friendly city like Washington, D.C., takes much courage, even if we drag our straight family and friends along.

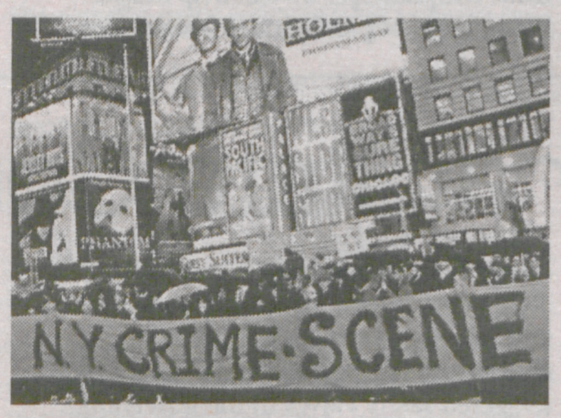
For lgbt people and our allies in Missouri, Maine and other states that control key votes in Congress, moving outside our comfort zones means demonstrating in our own backyards. These often-conservative places are where our voices – and the voices of our straight family and friends – must be heard.

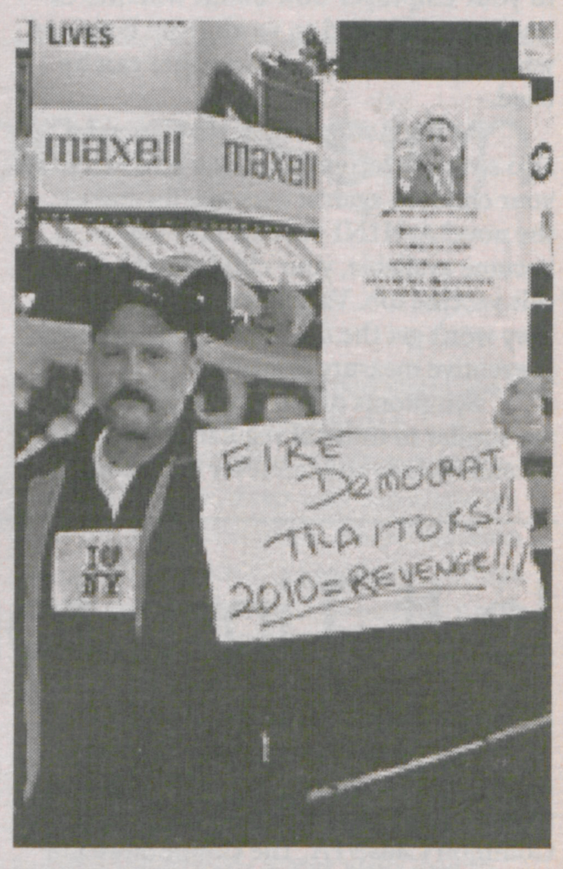
An lgbt march on Washington should be a great idea. Sometime in the future it might be. Just not today.

Diane Silver is a former newspaper reporter and magazine editor, whose work has appeared in The Progressive, Salon.com, Ms, and other national publications. She can be reached care of this publication or at PoliticalIQ@qsyndicate.com.

New Yorkers Protest Anti-marriage Vote

Hundreds of New Yorkers protested anti-marriage vote in Times Square and then in Union Square when last December the New York State Senate voted 24-against a bill that would have allowed gays and lesbians to marry. Photos by Andres Duque. NY Gov. David Paterson, state Sen. Tom Duane [D-Chelsea] and New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn were among the protestors. "I'm angry at the betrayal of people who are supposed to be standing up for our civil rights," Duane said. "There is no excuse for saying no."





Massachusetts Episcopal Bishop Allows Same-sex Weddings

More than five years after gays and lesbians began to legally marry in the Bay State, the bishop who oversees Episcopalian priests in Eastern Massachusetts officially granted them permission to officiate nuptials for same-sex couples.

Bishop M. Thomas Shaw III's decision comes a month after local clergy and parishioners endorsed a resolution that expressed hope he would allow priests within the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts to officiate these weddings. He further discussed his decision in an interview with the Boston Globe.

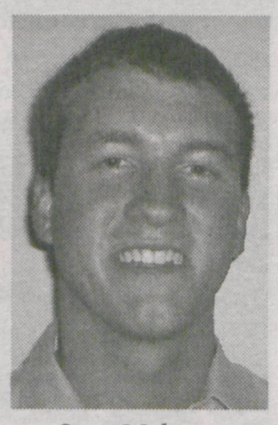
"The time has come," Shaw said. "It's time for us to offer to gay and lesbian people the same sacrament of fidelity that we offer to the heterosexual world."

Shaw's decision comes more than six years after New Hampshire Episcopalians consecrated openly gay Bishop V. Gene Robinson. And it is sure to further stoke the internal debate within both the American Episcopal Church and the broader Anglican Communion over the role gays and lesbians will continue to play and whether priests should allow same-sex couples to marry.

The Rev. Anne C. Fowler of Jamaica Plain was among those who applauded Shaw's decision to the Globe.

LGBT community center coalition

Year in Review & Forward for the LGBT Community Center"



Sean Maloney

The past year has brought a lot of exciting things to central Pennsylvania's lgbt community. In January, the LGBT Community Center merged with Common Roads creating an organization that was perfectly aligned to serve both youth and adults in the region.

Since the merger center staff have been working hard to bring relevant programming to your own back yard. We have offered groups like the Book Clubs and Outdoor Group that have been well attended by many in our area. In addition to those clubs, social mixers are being held every other month at York's Club XS. Youth are attending Friday Night Safe Spaces each week in Harrisburg and Lancaster. A great leadership development series has brought together community leaders each month to discuss the issues that impact our organizations the most.

Let's not forget FAB, the elegant black-tie gala that brought more than 500 people to Lancaster to celebrate our unique diversity and the success of the center.

As the LGBT Community Center prepares for another vibrant year of programming and services for our eight county region, we wanted to share with you what some of our ideas were for the coming year.

Many individuals have been asking for programming that is aimed at the older lgbt community. These requests have been heard and we are pleased to announce the formation of a committee to start planning the creation of SAGE in central PA.

Additionally, a health & wellness council is being formed along with a youth advisory council to better address the concerns of lgbt youth. Anyone who is interested in participating in one of these committees should contact the center right away.

Common Roads will be hosting the GSA Summit once again which takes place Feb. 26 at Dickinson College. A whole new line-up of workshops and presentations will help create dialogue among our youth and encourage them to take on new leadership roles within their schools. If you would like to volunteer or attend the summit please contact Louie Marven, Director of Education and Youth Services, at (717) 920-9534 or lmarven@centralpalgbtcenter.org.

If all of that is not enough, the Queen of Winter Hearts contest is back and better than ever. Contestants this year will be selling raffle tickets for a prize that is so good everyone will want to get a ticket. The winner will be announced on Sat., Feb. 20 at the Queen of Winter Hearts Ball. You want more? Also performing that night will be the insanely talented Kaci Battaglia on the stage at Club XS. This is definitely a concert performance you will not want to miss. For more information visit our webpage at www.centralpalgbtcenter.org or become our fan on facebook.

All of these events are brought to you by the LGBT Community Center but not without the help of valuable volunteers. If you are interested in helping out with one of the programs listed above, joining a committee, or creating your own event, contact Sean Maloney, Director of Programming and Community Development at (717) 920-9534 or smaloney@centralpalgbtcenter.org.

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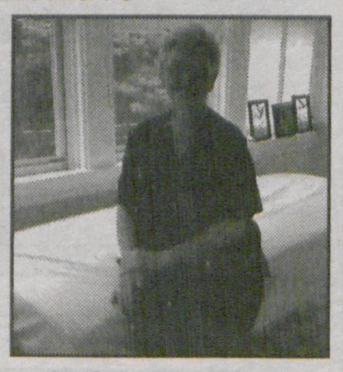

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Transition: *Promises of Hope and New Beginnings*

By Jeanine Ruhsam
TransCentralPA

The days are growing shorter as the year had cycled to its end. Our many faith paths all relate to that: the archetype of death and the coming rebirth. We now look to the New Year, and all its promises of hope and new beginnings.

Most all of us readily accept and embrace this cycle of repeated transition, even as our own lives follow their seasons to the penultimate dark of winter and death. Many of us, as we mature, look back and forward, and wonder, "What if"? What if we could be born again, into a new identity, but with all the knowledge of our past?

This is one of the sirens calling the transgender person: we are given the tools to transition and effect a rebirth, into a new body and a new identity, so to conform to society's demand that we not challenge the accepted standard for gender role compliance. Simply put: you either conform to the role and appearance of a man, or that of a woman…you are not free to be both/and.

So if you come to accept the reality that you were born a transgender person (a person whose sense of gender identity does not conform with the sex they were assigned at birth) , you must completely and successfully change your being so to be accepted in the gender role you feel you are. Indeed, we are pressed into this rebirth: the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of the American Psychiatric Association proclaims gender reassignment as the cure for what it calls "Gender Identity Disorder", which pro-claims normal gender-diverse people mentally ill, just as an earlier version classified gay and lesbian people.

Three days ago Sportswriter Mike Penner of the Los Angeles Times took his own life.

Two and one half years ago Mike stunned the American press and sports fans by coming out as Christine Daniels and saying, "I am a transsexual sports writer. It has taken more than 40 years, a million tears and hundreds of hours of soul-wrenching therapy for me to work up the courage to type those words." Four months later Christine was honored by the National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association at its convention in San Diego for telling her story publicly. "We are born with this. We fight it as long as we can, and in the end it wins", she said, trying to convey to her readers and the world why Mike was urgently compelled to take the journey to become Christine.

Thirteen months ago Christine quietly became Mike…again.

Why did she/he re-transition? "It's unfortunate and it's relatively uncommon but certainly not unheard of," says Denise Leclair, executive director of the International Foundation for Gender Education, Washington, DC based transgender advocacy group of which I am a director. "The simplest way to think about it is being trans is something that never goes away. There's just a fairly constant social pressure to just go back. You don't have to be a genius to understand that society doesn't really accept this." As a transgender person, Denise says, necessarily "You become a very visible minority".

Donna Rose, a nationally known transgender advocate who was the keynote speaker at TransCentralPA's Keystone Conference 2009 in March, commented "The thing that people have to understand is that even though Mike decided to re-transition, that doesn't mean he's not Trans. It's not like you go all of a sudden, 'Uh, I'm better.' Going back doesn't automatically clear the conundrum that causes you to get there in the first place."

Mike died, and Christine was born. Christine died, and Mike was reborn.

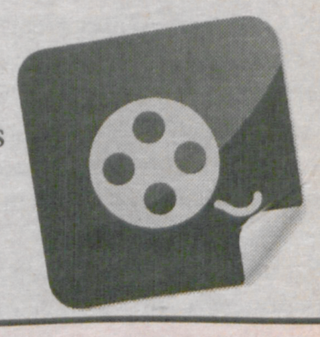
Three days ago they both died.

Info: www.transcentralpa.org

Videos on thecentralvoice.ning.com

Find these videos on thecentralvoice.ning.com

- Lady Gaga's latest music video "Bad Romance"
- RuPaul's Drag Race winner Bebe Zaharia Benet's music video
- Trans activist Joanne Herman, Part 1&2
- Kids in Amercia



Christmas Concert Smash Hit!

Known for theatricality second to none, Harrisburg Men's Chorus once again pulled out all the stops to entertain revelers Dec. 6 at Harrisburg Midtown Arts Center. "It's always so much more that just a concert, a bunch of songs sung by a choral group. The entertainment is at a much higher level," said one regular.

Photos by Angela Dicks

Open Stage Holds Special Workshops

Registration is open for Open Stage of Harrisburg's Studio/School winter theatre classes, located on the street level of the Walnut Street Parking Garage in downtown Harrisburg.

Children's and young people's workshop classes are held on two successive Saturdays and Sundays in January. Michele Manduchi will teach the workshops, Lit Alive!, for kids ages 10 to 14, Jan.16-17 from 2-6 p.m. both days, and Story Theatre, for kids ages 7 to 9, Jan.23 -24 from 10 a.m. to noon both days. Each workshop will focus on a piece of age-appropriate literature and will feature an informal performance for friends and family on the last day of class.

A six-week class called Theatre Fun 'n' Games, held Feb. 6 through March 13, will continue the classes for kids who want more intensive work in theatre.

A special "Early Bird" discount will be offered to students who register in advance.

Open Stage, a not-for-profit professional regional theatre, receives state arts funding support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency administering an annual state appropriation for grants to the arts and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. This program is funded, in part, by the Cultural Enrichment Fund, the capital region's united arts fund.

To register: Call 214-3250 or visit www.openstagehbg.com.

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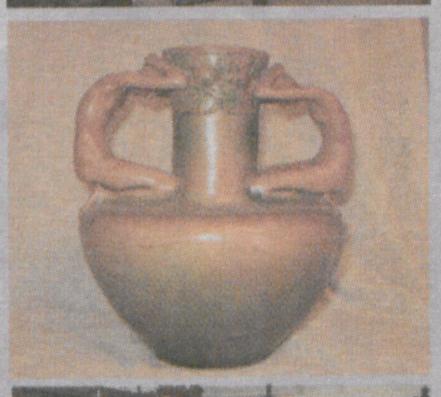

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Transgender Day of Remembrance

About 30 people gathered Nov. 20, 2009 on the steps of the Pennsylvania state capitol for "Transgender Day of Remembrance". The event was organized by TransCentral PA, Harrisburg's MCC of the Spirit Church, and the LGBT Community Center Coalition. Twelve volunteer readers, each holding a lit candle, read a short bio of a transgender person killed because they were different. Each reader then blew out the candle to commemorate the life lost.

SAGE Awards and Gala

The 14th Annual SAGE Awards and GALA, which took place on Monday, November 2nd at the Metropolitan Pavilion celebrated champions of the older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Michael Adams, Executive Director of SAGE (left) stands with SAGE Award winners comedienne Kate Clinton and former U.S. ambassador James C. Hormel (far right). Standing center are Hormel's life partner, Michael Nguyen, and comedienne Anne Meara.

Photo Credit: Donna F. Aceto, SAGE

(L-R) Co-Chair of SAGE, Frank Stark stands with emcee of the 14th Annual SAGE Awards and Gala, Tony Award-winner Denis O'Hare, Co-Chair of SAGE Judith Turkel, and Executive Director of SAGE, Michael Adams.

Photo Credit: Donna F. Aceto, SAGE

LGBT activist and community leader, Urvashi Vaid is joined by NY State Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell and her partner, Kate Clinton, who was awarded the SAGE "Ken Dawson Advocacy Award."
Photo Credit: Donna F. Aceto, SAGE

Comedy on the Carpet: Comic performers Jerry Stiller, Anne Meara, SAGE Award-Winner Kate Clinton, and Denis O'Hare, (the newest cast member of HBO's "True Blood" and the evening's emcee) cause a rukus on the 14th Annual SAGE Awards red carpet.

Photo Credit: Donna F. Aceto, SAGE

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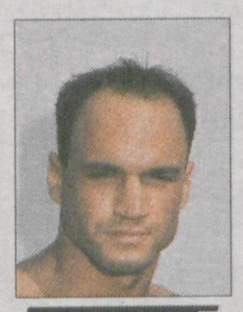

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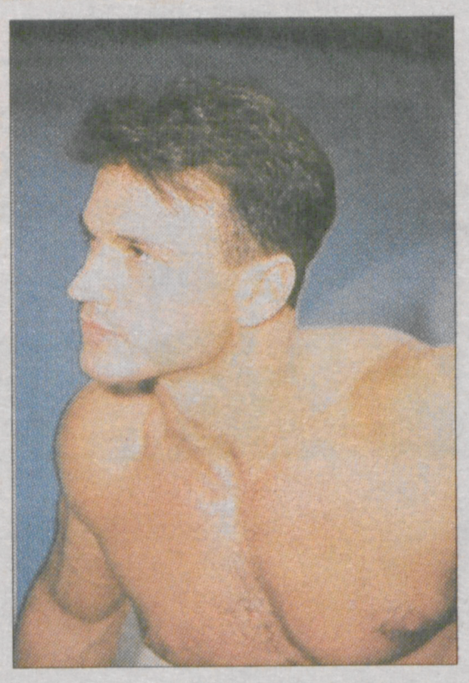

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Book Review: My Sweet Wild Dance

Author Mikaya Heart
(Dog Ear Publishing)

Written with searing honesty, this is the remarkable story of an extraordinary Scotswoman. Chris grew up in the impoverished aristocracy of post-war Scotland. The black sheep of her family, she struggled against the confines of class and gender, searching for truth in an atmosphere where lies were the norm. As soon as she was old enough to escape her parents' stranglehold, she tried on many different personas, experimenting with drugs, free love, and anti-establishment politics.

Always on the cutting edge of radical thought, she was active around environmental issues decades before they were common knowledge. Turning to Nature for solace, she moved to rural California, where she worked as a jill-of-all-trades, came out as a lesbian, and engaged in healing work centered around her sexuality.

Facing her fears and finding love, she experienced many varied, riveting, and mind-expanding adventures that brought her to a place of deep compassion and forgiveness. Eventually, satisfied with nothing short of absolute freedom, she sold everything and took to the road, becoming the woman who follows the wind.

Mikaya Heart knows how to dance her own sweet, wild dance, and she offers us a compelling picture of the agony and the ecstasy that are the rewards of choosing one's personal truth. The path she has forged through the jungle of life is an inspiration to anyone who is looking for the true meaning of love in our changing world.

www.mikayaheart.org

L to R - Greg King, national Equality to End AIDS Rally and Vigil organizer Christine Campbell, and Charles Oswald at the Oct. 10 national event preceding March on Washington. King and Oswald were married in Connecticut last November.

Man Behind Black & White Party

By Frank Pizzoli

Walt Disney said, "Don't dream it, do it". Charles Oswald is a man who makes dreams come true. His creative invention "The Black and White Party" has raised $52,000 for HIV/AIDS since its maiden voyage in 2007.

All of the funds benefit the local organizations, namely York's Family First and The AIDS Fund of South Central PA which disburses funds to HIV programs within the region.

The Black and White Party
Fri., May 7 – 6 p.m. - closing
York's Club XS
Theme: "Alice in Boogie Wonderland"
Headliner: TBA soon!
Raises funds for HIV/AIDS
www.TheBlackAndWhiteParty.com

The AIDS Fund is also affiliated with the National AIDS Fund (NAF) which provides matching dollars to the funds raised locally. The AIDS Fund is the only such endeavor in Pennsylvania with a "matching funds" relationship with NAF. "When you purchase a ticket or make a donation, you dollar goes a long way with our fundraiser," Oswald says.

"My boss asked me to mount a fundraiser, something that benefits the community," Oswald explains. He decided to do something benefitting the HIV/AIDS community. "The Black and White Party is loosely inspired by a similar venue produced in Las Vegas," he says.

As a fundraiser for HIV/AIDS organizations, the venue recently assembled a national board of directors to take the venue across the country. "HIV/AIDS is far from over, but hopefully we are on a path to its end. All over the country, AIDS walks are failing, fundraisers are ending, and the money just isn't there, but health care costs just continue to rise, and waiting lists to get medication are growing faster than ever," Oswald explains.

The original "black and white" concept for a party was conceived by the recently deceased Vanity Fair writer and Hollywood screenwriter, producer and all-around celeb Dominick Dunne. He and his wife had entertained Tinsel Town's old guard in his own home with a complete black and white theme. In 1965, the incomparable Truman Capote threw his famous Black and White Ball at NYC's Plaza Hotel.

"I decided to do this fundraiser simply because there is a need. We can help fill that need," Oswald says with conviction. "Our version of The Black and White Party is a much more extensive fundraiser. We have local talent, silent and live auctions, and more than eight hours of entertainment." The Las Vegas fundraiser is just food and a headliner followed by dancing. "I also felt that I didn't want a stuffy boring fundraiser with a key note speaker. It's an age where we as a younger generation want to be entertained, and we demand it, which is how I came up with The Black and White Party."

Entertaining others is in Oswald's blood. Born in Milwaukee, WI, he studied at the University of Wisconsin - Steven's Point, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Collins College School of Technology in Tempe, AZ, and the Art Institute of Phoenix. "I've studied everything from theater, dance, communications, marketing, graphic design, and TV/film," he says.

He's lived in Chicago, LA, Las

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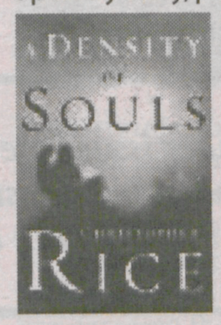
book review

Your New Year Night Stand

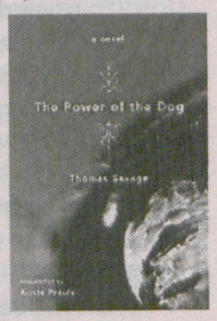
By Lewis Maurer
Dauphin County Library System
What's on the queer librarian's night stand for the New Year?

A Density of Souls by Christopher Rice
LGBT Book Club January Selection
Four high school students in present-day New Orleans are torn apart by envy, passion, and tragedy.



Meredith, Brandon, Greg, and Stephen quickly discover the fragile boundaries between friendship and betrayal as they enter high school and form new alliances. Brandon and Greg gain popularity as football jocks and Meredith joins the bulimic in-crowd, while Stephen becomes the target of homophobia in a school that viciously mocks him. Then two violent deaths disrupt the core of what they once shared. A Density of Souls is a stunning novel that lays bare the darker side of the teenage experience in modern-day America.

The Power of the Dog by Thomas Savage
LGBT Book Club February Selection
Set in 1920s Montana, Savage's 1967 novel introduces the Burbank brothers, whose lives are permanently altered when one falls in love with a widow and brings the woman and her son to live on their isolated ranch. This was the most loved book of the GLBT book club in Denver in 2005, consider these reviews:



"...a writer of the first order, and he possesses in abundance the novelist's highest art--the ability to illuminate and move..." -- The New Yorker

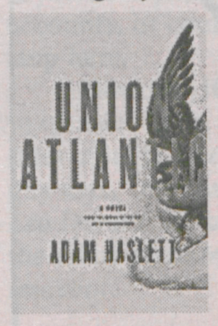
"...offers so many pleasures...Put simply, The Power of the Dog is a masterpiece..." -- Larry Watson, author of Montana 1948 and Justice

"A fine novel...studded with fleeting insights, and reverberating for some time after it is laid down." -- Jack McClintock, Chicago Tribune

"Gripping and tense...a work of literary art..." -- Annie Proulx

"Thomas Savage is a writer of real consequence...a masterful novelist..." -- Jonathan Yardley, Washington Post Book World

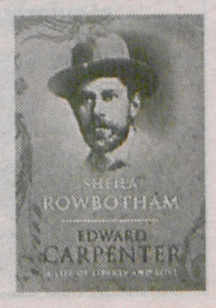
Union Atlantic by Adam Haslett
The eagerly anticipated debut novel from the author of the Pulitzer Prize finalist "You Are Not a Stranger Here": a deeply affecting portrait of the modern gilded age, the first decade of the twenty-first century will be released in February. At the heart of "Union Atlantic" lies a test of wills between a young banker, Doug Fanning, and a retired schoolteacher, Charlotte Graves, whose two dogs have begun to speak to her. Drawn into Doug and Charlotte's intensifying conflict is Nate Fuller, a troubled high-school senior who unwittingly stirs powerful emotions in each of them. Irresistibly complex, imaginative, and witty, "Union Atlantic" is a singular work of fiction that is sure to be read and reread long after it causes a sensation this spring. – Publisher's marketing



The Slow Fix by Ivan E. Coyote
Coyote is an important literary voice, blending a keen sense of gay identity and community with a refreshing appreciation for the goodness at the heart of some straight people."—Out. In The Slow Fix, Ivan returns to her short story roots in a collection that is disarming, warm, and funny, while it at the same time subverts our preconceived notions of gender roles. Ivan excels at finding the small yet significant truths in our everyday gestures and interactions. By doing so, she helps us to embrace not what makes us women or men, but human beings.

Spider Season by John Morgan Wilson
Benjamin Justice was once one of the most prominent and respected journalists in Los Angeles, even the country. But when it was discovered that he'd invented the sources for his Pulitzer Prize winning series of articles, he lost everything - his job, his reputation, his friends. Now, many years later, Justice has finally published a memoir revealing the truth behind the events that cost him so much and made him permanently radioactive in the journalism community. And this book may be his last chance to turn things around, to make a living writing as he'd always wanted. But his memoir brings out more than the truth - it brings out long-forgotten, long hidden ghosts from his past. And Justice finds himself, and everyone/everything he holds dear under attack.

Finally, one for the biography addicts:
Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love by Sheila Rowbotham



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"I enjoyed playing with girls" says Transgender Author

By Frank Pizzoli

"I enjoyed playing with girls," says Joanne Herman, transgender author of "Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not."

In a new book for friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors who want to better understand what it means to be transgender, the accomplished author, business woman and activist Herman has written, "Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not." She relies on accessible, unpretentious language, personal references and anecdotes, and current, comprehensive information about transgender issues.

"Transgender issues are increasingly being discussed in boardrooms and at breakfast tables, as part of policy initiatives and in workplace diversity trainings," Herman says. "I wrote this book to give our friends, allies, colleagues and neighbors insight into the transgender community, as a way to smooth the way for those who come after me."

Nationwide, transgender communities are visible. Houston Mayor Bill White declared July 25 Transgender Day. National organization Lambda Legal later last year filed a complaint with the Phila. Commission on Human Relations claiming that staff at a local youth facility allegedly harassed and discriminated against a teen transgender girl in its care.

USA today reported that 17-year-old Ceara Sturgis, a straight-A student, was not allowed to have her graduation photo published because she was wearing a tuxedo. Her mother calls her "a perfect child" who acknowledges that her daughter feels more comfortable in boys' clothes. "The yearbook is not for the parents or the teachers. It's for the students," Rodriguez said. "She's not a troublemaker. She is gay."

> *"Transgender issues are increasingly being discussed in boardrooms and at breakfast tables, as part of policy initiatives and in workplace diversity trainings"*

Locally, the region observed "Celebrating the Transgender Witness" Nov. 15 at MCC of the Spirit Church. "We acknowledged and celebrated the contributions of trans people in our community and in the life of our church," says interim pastor Rev. Charles Tigard.

Nov. 20 "Transgender Day of Remembrance" was held in the form of a candlelight vigil on the front steps of the Capitol. "Every year, a countless number of hate crimes remain unpunished. Transgender individuals are disproportionately targeted based on their gender identity and/or expression, and frequently have been attacked just for being who they are," said a news release.

"We all knew early on something about us was different, although we all may not have known what it was," Herman explains. The degree of personal insight varies. "Some transgender individuals figure it out more fully, sooner than others. What's important is have information. That's my book and other resources"

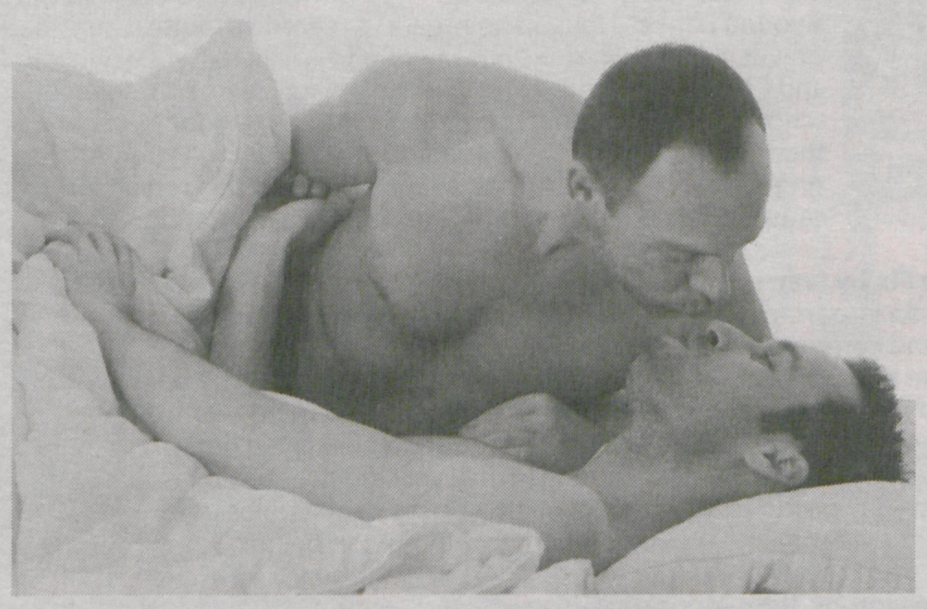
Organized into 30 chapters, the 148-page book has references, suggested reading, and resources.

TRANSGENDER EXPLAINED
For Those Who Are Not

Joanne Herman

Go to thecentralvoice.ning.com for video interviews with Herman.

HAVING SEX?



The CDC recommends that all sexually active gay / bi men be tested for HIV at least once a year.

HIV is 100% preventable. Take steps to reduce your risk. Use condoms, talk to your partners about HIV and STDs and get tested regularly.

Men4Men

Men4Men (M4M) is a program dedicated to the health and wellness of gay, bisexual and questioning men in South Central PA. M4M is a project of AIDS Community Alliance. For more information visit myspace.com/acam4m or call 1.800.867.1550.

Men4Men is funded in part by The AIDS Fund of South Central PA , FHCCP and Highmark.

Come to "Funky Town" at Bal Masque Feb. 6

Funky Town is THE place to be Feb. 6, 7 p.m. to midnight for The Bal Masque presented by the Art Association of Harrisburg. The event will held at Appalachian Brewing Company, Harrisburg, in the Brewery's Abbey Bar where you'll step through a time-warp into the 1970's under the big disco ball, lava lamps, a "Saturday Night Fever" lit dance floor reflecting sponsor logos lava lamps and a big screen live-feed of all the action.

In the Gallery, there's a Silent Auction with, among other items, restaurant , hotel and theatre packages, jewelry, a Cabot Cheese assortment, a certificate for Segways of Hershey, and even a guitar! Dr. Edwin North, the Bal's popular resident psychic, will do readings throughout the evening. There's a raffle for a weekend at a "Funky Cottage" on Silver Lake.

In keeping with the theme, the menu includes "Caffeine Jolt Grilled Chicken Bites," "Vegetarian Baked Bean Fritters," "Chocolate Trout," and "Coconut Beer Batter Spam with Raspberry Horseradish Sauce".

Back by popular demand are "Midnight Spaghetti and the Chocolate G-Strings" as the dance band, and "The Gadjo Playboys" as the Gypsy Swing musicians in the Gallery area. Chris Garrett will be the emcee.

This year the Art Association partners with Goodwill Industries by holding a clothing drive in conjunction with the event. With the "Funky Town" theme, where better to acquire costumes for the Bal than at a Goodwill Store. In the Harrisburg area, Goodwill Stores are at 627 Cameron Street, 5420 Jonestown Road, and 182 Engle Rd., in Elizabethville.

The Bal Masque originated in the 1940's as a true "artists' ball," and has continued as the region's premiere Mardi Gras celebration ever since. The Bal is the Art Association of Harrisburg's major fundraiser, as well as a great party benefitting their class and exhibition programs.

Underwriters for the 2010 Bal include Pinnacle Health, Crabtree Rohrbaugh, Lamar Advertising, Lehman Volvo, The Harrisburg DID, Capital City Mall, The Hall Foundation, Fry Communications, Quandel, and WHTM-TV, Media Sponsor.

Tickets: $45 for open seating; Reserved seating $65; www.artassocofhbg.com; 717-236-1432.

Black & White cont'd

Vegas, and Phoenix. "I moved to Pennsylvania for my former partner whose father has Alzheimer's disease. We broke up in 2004 and then I met Greg King in 2006. We are happily married as of November 25, 2009.

"I value my work in the community because it's the most rewarding thing I could ever do. I started working with non-profits by volunteering. I learned the most through volunteering for the Make-A-Wish Foundation in Arizona, and from having large gatherings and parties for my friends at my home in the various cities where I've lived," Oswald says.

These experiences taught Oswald how to put an event together, how to entertain people from all walks of life. "Whether a celebration, or benefit, or fundraiser, the concept is generally simple and takes a lot of planning," he shares.

Some see him a planning Pied Piper leading others to do good in what can be an uncaring world.

"One of my biggest role models for doing 'good' is my own mother. She has always taught my brother and me to do good for others. My grandmother taught me to live by the Golden Rule. My father taught me the value of friendship, and being able to lead others, doing things for a greater purpose. He is a faithful volunteer at the American Legion, and is always the 'guy' that everyone loves. I hope I follow in his footsteps with this quality," Oswald says.

What does Oswald do for fun?

"That's a good joke actually. My husband and I literally have to schedule time to be alone and intimate," Oswald shares. He's involved in many activities and has had to choose between different commitments, cut some things loose.

"I found that I was involved in too many things, so I was not being an effective leader." He's pared down feels he's "much more effective," and able to make a difference without getting bogged down. "Of course, now that I have started a new marriage, I know that I still need to find more time for my husband, so that I don't regret things down the road, and I'm still working on that. Life has to be a good balance between family, work, and my daily life, but my family must come first."

He met his husband Greg King while working on a benefit youth group Common Road at Club XS. "From the first day I ever saw him, I was in love. We didn't see each other for months after we first met, as I was in full swing with The Black and White Party, and he was recently single," Oswald explains. When they finally reconnected to work on the Common Roads fundraiser, they scheduled a dinner meeting. "I kept thinking how am I gonna' possibly ask this hot guy out on a date?" Before he could, King had already asked Oswald on a date. "I was so thrilled, I could hardly sleep that night!" Oswald remembers.

Oswald and King have known each other for about two years. And, as dreams go and some do come true, King asked Oswald to marry him at last year's benefit. Oswald had "asked" King to marry him by placing an ad in the fundraiser's program booklet that said "Greg, you are the love of my life. Will you marry me?"

What Oswald hadn't known is that King was secretly planning on asking Oswald to marry him the same day. He had rings in his pocket the night of the event. Throughout the evening, King pretended he hadn't seen Oswald's ad. "When the time was right, he asked me to come onstage and asked me to marry him, pulling out our rings. My mother was in the audience, visiting from Wisconsin. So was King's mom. They cried," Oswald says.

With a story like that how could you not want to attend The Black and White Party?

The event draws in dozens of volunteers each year to staff the outside and inside entertainment. "Chris Quigley, who directs both the inside entertainment, and Chad-Alan Carr who will direct the outside entertainment, are ready to wow the pants off of you! Plus we always have a big name act to top off the evening," Oswald says. Past performers have included RuPaul, CeeCee Peniston, and Sarah Bernhardt. "The inside show alone is now expanded to 10 numbers, and the event just gets bigger and better with each passing year," Oswald says smiling.

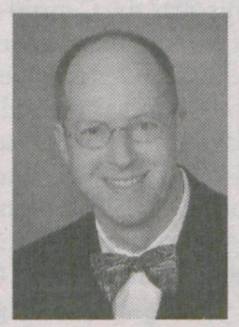
Book review cont'd

Challenging many of the values and conceits of Western civilization, the gay socialist writer Edward Carpenter had an extraordinary impact on the cultural and political landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. An advocate of, among other causes, free love, recycling, nudism, women's suffrage and prison reform, Carpenter's work anticipated the sexual revolution of the 1960s and placed him at the epicenter of the literary culture of his day. Meticulously researched and beautifully written, this major new biography situates Carpenter's life and thought in relation to the contemporary social, aesthetic and intellectual movements, and explores his friendships with figures such as Walt Whitman, Robert Graves, Oscar Wilde, E.M. Forster, Isadora Duncan and Emma Goldman. Edward Carpenter paints a compelling portrait of a man who has been described as a "weather-vane" for his times.

Info: Stop by your Dauphin County Library System library or visit www.DCLS.org for access to the best in lgbt titles.

legal column

When a Will is Not Needed



By Leo L. Dunn

"Why should I pay a lawyer for a Will?" the old guy grouched, "It doesn't give me any benefit. They can fight all they want when I'm gone."

Does this sound familiar? It certainly does to me. I hear it all the time from family members and friends. Sometimes even from clients! A person has a Will executed for two basic reasons: to make sure assets go to whom s/he desires and in order to protect the people s/he loves.

If a person dies (the decedent) intestate (without a Will) in Pennsylvania, the rules are fairly simple and go basically as follows: If the decedent was married, with no children from a prior marriage and no surviving parent, the surviving spouse gets 100%. If there are children from a prior marriage, the spouse and kids divide the assets. If there are no children, but a surviving parent of the decedent, then the spouse and parent(s) split the assets. If no surviving spouse, the assets are divided between any children of the decedent (grandkids 'step-up' in place of any children that pre-deceased the decedent). If no spouse and no children, then the decedent's parents get 100% if they are still alive. If no spouse, no children and no surviving parents, then the decedent's siblings divide the assets in equal percentages (with their children 'stepping-up' if they are deceased). If the decedent has no surviving spouse, children, parents or siblings, then assets go to any surviving grandparents, aunts, uncles and their children or grandchildren. Note that adopted and half-blood relatives are viewed the same as any other relative in each category. If no one survives in any of these categories, then the assets go to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Of course, if you have a spouse who you want to receive your entire estate (or certain major assets like a house) even if your parents or children from a prior marriage survive you – you need a Will. Likewise, if you have a same-sex or opposite-sex partner to whom you are not married (remember: under PA law no same-sex marriages are currently recognized as valid for legal purposes) and you want them to receive assets that you have not jointly titled with them – you need a Will. If you want certain members of your family and friends to receive assets, but not others – you need a Will. If you want to make it unlikely that there will be fighting over your assets – you need a Will. If you want to reduce the amount of your assets that could be consumed in a legal battle by attorneys' fees – you need a Will. If you live with another person you love and want to protect by giving them assets upon your death – you need a Will. If you have non-adult children that may require guardianship after your death – you need a Will. If you have placed the majority of your assets in a trust, but still maintain checking accounts, or could inherit assets from others – you need a Will. I could go on, but I'll stop here.

However, if the intestate scheme described above is how you want your assets to transfer upon your death and you do not live with another person with whom you inter-mingle assets, expenses and income, you probably don't need a Will. As the old guy says, "Let them fight over it after you're gone!"

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in Harrisburg with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunn-law.com

Art Association Offers Winter Arts Classes

Registrations are now being accepted for Winter Semester Art Classes for children and adults at the Art Association of Harrisburg. Classes are being offered both at the 21 N. Front St. studios and in the four studios in Reservoir Park. Winter classes begin the week of January 11 and run through the end of March. The class schedule is available online at www.artassocofhbg.com, or call 236-1432 for a schedule in the Fall Newsletter.

Drawing classes for adults include Basic Drawing, Portraiture, and Life Study Workshop. Three-dimensional classes featured are Hand-Built Pottery, Advanced Glazing, Wheel Pottery, Clay Sculpture and Introduction to Wood and Metal Sculpture. Adult painting classes offered are Basic Oil, Basic Acrylic, Advanced Oil, Watercolor, Intermediate Drawing and Painting, and The Epic American Landscape: Materials and Methods Workshop. Other media are Collage, Jewelry Workshop, Basics of Digital Photography, and Digital Photography for Artists.

For children ages 5 to 15, classes include Art for Kids, Drawing and Painting for Kids, Junior Drawing and Painting, Fantasy Art, Clay for Kids, and Painting for Youth.

Many adult AAH classes are suitable for both beginning and professional artists who want to hone their skills. All are taught by practicing, professional artists.

Call 236-1432 for more information.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

January 29 & 30
As part of the Pennsylvania Progressive Summit, on Fri., Jan. 29 and Sat., Jan. 30, there will be two workshops regarding lgbt equality. One will focus on non-discrimination, and the other will focus on marriage equality. Other big draws to the summit will be a debate including five Democrats running for Pennsylvania Governor, and a U.S. Senate debate.

February 6
Saturday night, February 6, The Midtown Arts Center, on the corner of 3rd and Herr Streets, will host a social starting at 9 p.m. to include a drag show. This venue will be used to draw in a generally progressive crowd for an alternative and fun night. Along with the entertainment, show-goers will be flooded with lgbt equality awareness and details of the upcoming events for Freedom to Marry Week, PA.

February 7 – 14
Starting Sun., Feb. 7 and lasting until Sun., Feb. 14, the PDN Photo Project will be hanging in the Capitol Rotunda. This is an art project created by Liz Bradbury, Executive Directory of PA Diversity Network (PDN), consisting of photos of gay and lesbian couples. Approximately 400 gay couples - 800 gay and lesbian people or 1600 eyeballs - will be glaring at legislators and their visitors as they walk to and from their offices.
Over the summer, many citizens signed yellow cards at Pride Festivals in Harrisburg, Reading and Allentown testifying that they would like to see Senate Bill 935 become law, striking down PA's 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and enabling marriage equality. Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Mon., Feb. 8, those cards will be handed to their respective senators and house representatives. Several meetings are already scheduled, and for other legislators, the cards will be dropped off in their offices with requests to speak with the legislators or staff.

February 8
Senator Daylin Leach, sponsor of SB. 935 for marriage equality, will lead a press conference at 3 p.m. on Mon., Feb. 8, in front of the steps of the Capitol Rotunda.
He will stress the importance of his bill, and then introduce other speakers who will guide the audience to the understanding that all citizens deserve the religious freedom and civil equality we were promised when we became citizens of Pennsylvania.
After the press conference, Alanna Berger, a member of UUPLAN and the coordinator of the previous annual rallies, will lead the crowd in a march down State Street, left on Front St. and to the corner of Front and Market Streets. Here the crowd will stand outside of the Dauphin County Courthouse, which won't accept the application of marriage licenses for a select few couples that inquire. The crowd will demonstrate their anger, protest the injustice and be witnessed by automobile occupants in the most crowded intersection of Harrisburg during rush hour, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., Feb. 8.

February 9
On Tues., Feb. 9, The HACC Allies, a Gay-Straight Alliance student club of Harrisburg Area Community College, will host an event to bring awareness to the plight of same-gender couples seeking marriage equality.

February 11
Led by Rabbi Carl Choper, a multitude of faiths that recognize same-gender marriage will celebrate love and marriage within St. Michael's Lutheran Church on 118 State St., Thur., Feb 11, starting at 6 p.m. This celebration will be followed by a candlelight vigil, walking the full length of State St. They will pass other churches whose views are respected, but protested when those views are presented to dictate discrimination in civil law. The path of the vigil encompasses houses of opposing religious views, and the state house, which should not be swayed by these views, but rather, offer religious freedom and civil equality to all citizens.

February 13
This year the Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus is dedicating their second annual Valentine's Day dinner, being held at 6 p.m., Sat., Feb 13, to the cause of marriage equality. The Chorus is excited to announce that the event will take place at the Posada Resort and Spa, formerly Days Inn, on Eisenhower Blvd., and will feature a sumptuous buffet, cash bar, and DJ. This event will serve as a romantic, social and loving evening for couples and singles that are networked mostly through the LGBT community. It also offers a night of dinner and dancing, excluding the annoyance of unaccepting, gawking eyes.
On V-Day itself, the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg will host a social favoring diversity, following their Sunday service. The social will take to the streets with a march from the new church on 1508 Market St. to the Capitol steps. Other congregations across the city are invited to march after their own services, and meet in front of Pennsylvania's legislative house.

February 16
Tues., Feb 16, The Interfaith Alliance of Pennsylvania has dedicated their monthly program to a panel discussion of Civil vs. Religious marriage.

Freedom to Marry Week
- PENNSYLVANIA

All of these events promote marriage equality. They have been designed to reach into many subcultures and timeslots in order to bring awareness and education to as many people as possible, including legislators, faith groups, and students. The events will even reach into everybody's living room through the media. You can find the latest details for all of these events on FreedomToMarryPA.org.

(see full story on page one)

The King Sings

By Frank Pizzoli

Elvis Presley hit the music scene in 1954. Brad Crum started singing his songs in 1960. "I was in grade school," the Halifax native says.

January 8 marks Presley's 75th birthday when Crum performs in "Remembering Elvis – A 75th Birthday Tribute Concert" with m and the BCT Legend Band, Sunoco Performance Theater, 8pm. Tickets are $15 - $28. Reviewers say Crum brings the excitement of Elvis back to the stage. Known for his impressive 3 ½ octave vocal range, he reaches notes most other impersonators cannot in songs such as Hurt, How Great Thou Art and American Trilogy.

You will think you are in the presence of the King himself as Crum and the BCT Legend Band perform more than 30 Elvis hits in this Las Vegas style show. "I started outside my wife's gift shop," Crum explains. She wanted to draw in customers and he did. Crum is so well-known as Elvis that McFarland toys used his body as a model for an Elvis doll.

He's now newcomer to the entertainment world. "A Crum family band first formed in the 1960s. "We went from 1968 to 2004. That's 36 years of oldies, classics, you name it." And even though Elvis' music stretches back six decades, Crum says "I'm amazed at how kids today have their bedrooms filled with memorabilia. It's wild."

One warm feature that shines through with Crum is his "give back" outlook. "I've done gospel benefit shows for churches," he says. Funds raised through his talents have gone to pay high oil bills for small congregations as well as to pay for church volunteers to visit New Orleans Katrina efforts. In all, Crum can sing about 250 songs. He even does a Roy Orbison show, but that's another story.

CORRECTION:

In last issue's (Nov-Dec 2009) profile of Lancaster artist Anthony Smolenski we incorrectly identified Smolenski as recently presenting a painting "Equal Painting" to the Central Pennsylvania Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Smolenski was commissioned George Fernandez, American Generations Magazine, Vice President of Business Development, who himself presented the painting to the chamber "as a token of my appreciation for bringing diversity into our community" in central Pennsylvania.

Indy Film:
"It's a Charmed Life" Is Raw Drag Queen Energy

By Frank Pizzoli

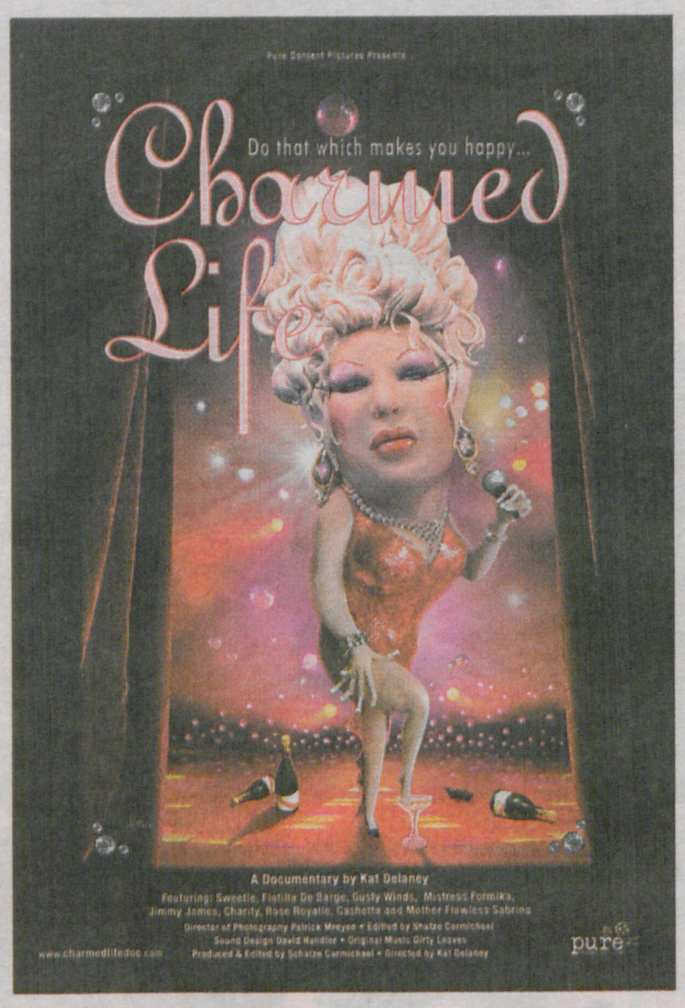
"I wanted to play Dolly!" exclaims Sweetie explaining how she decided on a theater career at about age 7 when mom took her to see "Hello Dolly!"

Sweetie (Daniel Booth) is narrator for a moving shaking film festival screens. "It's a Charmed Life" is an indy film directed by Katherine Delaney, a raw and witty peek under the make-up and garb of drag queens and their culture. HX said the documentary was full of "gut-busting quotables" from the large cast.

The story line follows three generations of drag performers – Mother Flawess Sabrina, Gusty Winds, and Charity plus Sweetie as on-screen narrator, one of NYC's well-known performers - by carefully and humorously examining how a queen is conceived and what it means to be a performer.

The film has recently

continued on page 21



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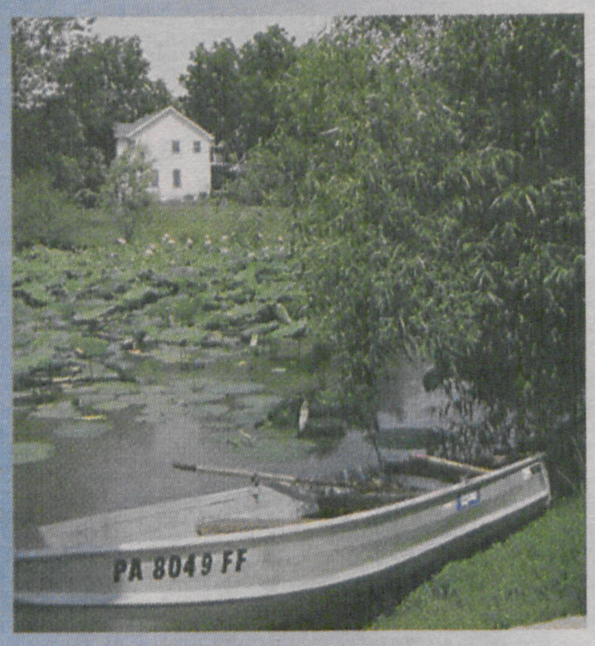

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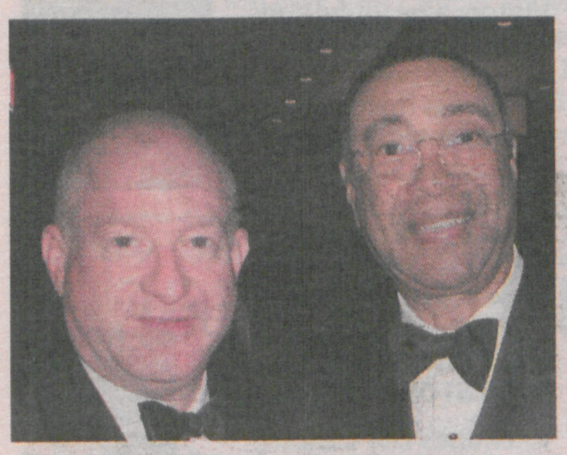
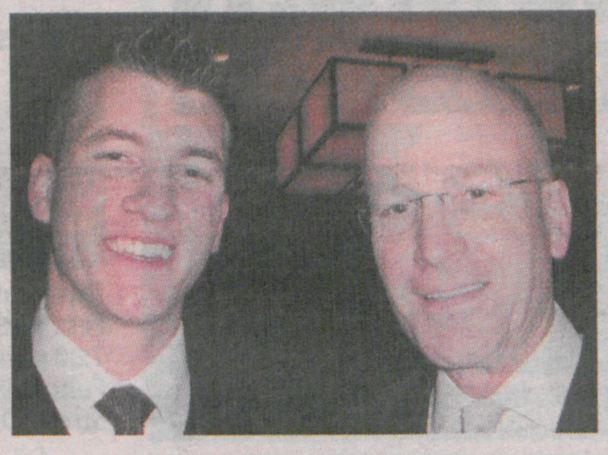
FAB Draws 530, Lancaster Mayor, 2 Gubernatorial Candidates

See more photos on next page >

Back with a roar, FAB drew 530 attendees Nov. 14 in Lancaster County's new downtown convention center on the site of the former Watt & Shand department store. Three-term Scranton mayor and now gubernatorial candidate Chris Doherty attend the dinner. Former US congressman and current Montgomery County Commissioner Joseph M. Hoeffel worked the crowd before dinner. Newly-re-elected Lancaster mayor Rick Gray attended the entire event.





2009 - 2010 SEASON

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In association with BRE Presents...

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Sat., Feb. 13 | 7:30pm

America's Premier Pink Floyd Experience!

In association with BRE Presents...

Ani DeFranco

Wed., Feb. 3 | 7:30pm

Singer/songwriter... self-described "Little Folksinger."

CapLive presents

Dar Williams

Fri., Mar. 5 | 8:00pm

"A new generation of pop-folk enthusiasts lauds her as one of the genre's central figures."- Paste

In association with BRE Presents...

Straight No Chaser

Tues., Apr. 30 | 7:30pm

The same ten-member, all male a capella ensemble and musical phenomenon featured on *The Today Show.*

And, coming up...

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (R)

Thur., Dec. 31 | 10:00pm

An onstage cast leads the fun! Costumes & dry props encouraged.

Sponsored by: GLBT Community Center

Cabaret

Fri., Jan. 29 | 7:30pm

Winner of 12 Tony Awards! *Interpreted for the deaf.* Presenting sponsor: Fulton Bank

Jungle Jack Hanna

Sat., Feb. 6 | 7:30pm

Enjoy many of Jack's favorite animal friends, hear humorous stories, & meet him in the lobby!

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"Agony & Ecstasy: Khachaturian and Tchaikovsky"
Jan. 15, 8 p.m.,
Jan. 16, 3 & 8 p.m.,
Jan. 17, 7:30 pm
"Authentic Mozart" with Maestro Stephen
Feb. 19, 8 p.m., Feb. 20, 3 & 8 p.m., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.
Fulton Opera House, 12 North Prince Street, Downtown Lancaster

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Tickets: $7 each - adult or child
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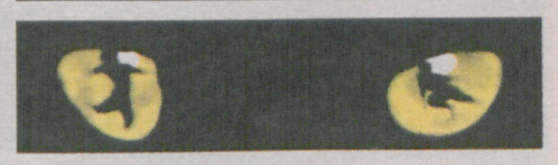
Cheryl Wheeler,
7:30 p.m., $20



CATS: America's Favorite Family Musical Headed to Hershey

The show that revolutionized musical theatre is coming to Hershey Theatre for five performances from July 30 through Aug. 1. Tickets go on sale Dec. 5 at 10 a.m.

Produced by CATS-Eye, LLC, the national tour of CATS is the only production in North America sanctioned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. With original direction by Trevor Nunn and choreography by Gillian Lynne this is the CATS credited with the British invasion of Broadway. The national tour of CATS recently celebrated its 27th anniversary season, holding its place as the

continued on page 23 >

Harrisburg Men's Chorus Concerts Jan. 23 & 24

Harrisburg Men's Chorus presents "We Are Made For Music," Sat., Jan. 23, 8 p.m. and Sun., Jan. 24, 2 p.m. at Harrisburg Midtown Arts Center, Herr and North 3rd Streets.

The concert is a good recipe for the January blahs by mixing Vivaldi and Schubert with a bit of Irving Berlin and Cole Porter, add a dash of Disney, blend in equal amounts of Joseph Martin, Mark Hayes and Greg Gilpin, lace it with a splash of solos and surprises, shake things up with a '60s medley, and you have a mid-winter musical tonic.

The chorus includes, among other songs, "Gloria" and "Kyrie" to "Theme and Variations on 'Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah.'" "This Little Light of Mine" and Gilpin's "Why We Sing" contrast fittingly with "Da Doo Ron Ron" and "You Don't Own Me."

Tickets are $15 which can be bought at www.harrisburgmenschorus.org, 717-236-3809, or at the door.

Charmed Life cont'd

screened at two festivals in New York and Atlanta to great reviews. Sweetie's credits includes the films "Too Wong Foo", "Starbooty" and the show "Project Runway".

Moving interviews and performances punctuate the documentary revealing the skill, technique and humor necessary to transcend gender. As one of the queens says, "any clown can put on a dress, but they're not going to be around for a long time."

"Charmed Life" opens the door to a world rarely seen by mainstream society. Working drag performers divulge everything from trade secrets to the perils of dating. They lament the misconceptions of their craft by society and strive to set the record straight. Drag is after all a celebration of life.

The documentary explores the lives of artists who buck convention and embrace life on the fringe. Civil liberties diminish daily across the globe yet these performers fight for the right to be visible. As minds grow smaller and societies become less tolerant of any genre of performance that provokes thought or pushes buttons, the question remains what is so controversial about a man in a dress?

This provocative documentary champions the universal need for tolerance, love and acceptance. Charmed Life challenges its audience to see past the surface, to ask questions and to open their hearts and minds. It is a ticket into the world of Drag performance; a portrait of its glorious inhabitants.

The Queens: Mother Flawless Sabrina, Flotilla Debarge, The Mistress Formika, Sherry Vine, Jimmy James, Cashetta, Rose Royalle, Gusty Winds, Shaboomboom, T-boy, Linda Simpson, Destiny, Chitah Daniels Kennedy, Melinda Thomas, Milan,

Charmed Life trailer at thecentralvoice.ning.com

About the Director Katherine Delaney

"It's a Charmed Life" director Katherine Delaney says she was feeling "creatively stifled" when she answered a Craig's List ad hunting a talk show director. "Sweetie had placed the ad. She wanted to host a show about all the NYC nightclub people she knew and performed with," Delaney explains. Sweetie had finished a SONY pilot in LA on a bunch of drag queens living together. Unfortunately, the project went the way of most pilots, but by then Delaney and Sweetie had cemented their creative bond. "I followed her with a camera for about 18 months all around NYC nightclubs and at Highlife/Lowlife where Sweetie hosts a regular gig," Delaney explains. From guest talent they assembled the Diva cast reflective of drag queen humor, angst, and surprises.

The screen credit for Delaney's love of film goes to her parents who took her to see "everything, from Hollywood classics to Westerns. My father left me a sum of money, maybe enough to buy a car, and I used that money to finance this project as a way to honor what he gave me as a child."

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Grace is an open and affirming congregation. Though we are not large, we are distinctive. Our members include people from a variety of ages, family structures, sexual orientations, denominational backgrounds, and religious convictions. We are artists, laborers, educators, business people, professionals, retirees, and homemakers. With this diversity, we manage a strong sense of openness and community in the Spirit of Christ.

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2010 *Health Update*

Survey for Older LGBT Adults

The National Senior Citizens Law Center, Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the National Center for Transgender Equality, and Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE), are working together to raise awareness of the issues facing older adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender ("LGBT") and live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other long-term care facilities. They hope to identify areas where policy changes will improve care, and to find other older adults, advocates and providers interested in these issues.

The survey is only 16 questions. It should take no more than ten minutes to fill it out. The survey completely protects your confidentiality. (However, we are looking for volunteers willing to be interviewed, so please consider checking that box!) The deadline for responding to the survey is December 15, 2009.

To complete the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UPQXC5Gub99IvdRNz83Hwg_3d_3d%20

2010 Healthcare Equality Index Survey Launched

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) are seeking participants for the annual Healthcare Equality Index survey. The online survey focuses on healthcare facility policies related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients. Topics include nondiscrimination policies, cultural competency training, and recognition of families that are headed by same-sex couples.

Info: http://www.hrc.org/issues/hei.asp

2010 American Legacy Foundation Youth Activism Fellowship

Applications are now being accepted for the 2010 American Legacy Foundation Youth Activism Fellowship. This program provides an opportunity for young adults ages 18-24 to build leadership in the tobacco control movement through training, coaching, peer to peer networking, and direct action. This program embodies and promotes Legacy's mission to build a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit. Drawing on imaginative, practical and effective strategies to reach young people with their message, members sharpen their skills and organizing experience to work passionately as tobacco control and prevention advocates in their communities.

Sexuality Education Effective Findings Show

Sex-education programs that encourage teens to delay sexual activity and teach them about contraception cut risky sexual behavior, increase condom use and lower the chances of getting HIV/AIDS and other STIs, a panel of independent experts concluded in a report released November 6th.

There is, however, insufficient evidence to know whether programs that focus on encouraging teens to remain sexually abstinent until marriage are effective, the panel concluded. The findings come as Congress considers whether to approve President Obama's request to discontinue earmarking funding specifically for abstinence programs, and instead allocate funding based on whether scientific research supports the approach.

Kenya Addresses Homosexuality to Fight HIV/AIDS

Confronted by growing evidence that sex between men is a significant driver of new HIV infections, the Kenyan government has shed a longtime refusal to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality, and will launch a survey of gay or lgbt attitudes and behaviors in its three biggest cities next year. The project is considered a landmark because the government and the vast majority of Kenyan people have long refused to address homosexuality in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Sex between men is illegal in Kenya — punishable by up to 14 years in prison — and is seen by many as a Western-imported, morally wrong behavior that is limited to areas visited by tourists.

Officials say the country is in the middle of a full-blown HIV/AIDS epidemic, with about 7% of the population now infected and only 15% of those people even aware that they are HIV positive. Initial media reports said the project, which was announced last week, would be a gay census — raising fears that gays could be exposed against their will and also questions about whether such a count could possibly be accurate. However, the government says all information collected will be kept confidential, and officials will not seek to contact all men who have sex with men in Kenya. The government will also seek to interview both male and female sex workers and intravenous-drug users.

PA House Judiciary Comm. Passes LGBT-inclusive Hate Crimes Legislation

The Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee today passed House Bill 745, legislation to amend the Title 18 Ethnic Intimidation Act to include protections for actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity by a bipartisan 18-8 vote.

House Bill 745, introduced by Representative Josh Shapiro (D-153), would reinstate hate crime protections originally passed in 2002 for LGBT people, but that were later struck down by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2008.

"This morning's bipartisan vote shows that protecting each and every Pennsylvanian, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue, but rather a moral imperative for our entire Commonwealth," said Jake Kaskey, Policy and Programs Director of Equality Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania's leading lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organization. "Thousands of LGBT Pennsylvanians thank those elected officials that today stood up against violence motivated by hate." According to statistics compiled by Equality Pennsylvania, from 2006 to 2007 hate violence against LGBT people across Pennsylvania increased by 28 percent, and one report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates hate crimes targeted at LGBT Americans are under-reported by more than 30 percent. Since 2001, more than 420 people have called the legal hotline to report incidents of hate-incited violence, from every corner of the state.

"Today's bipartisan vote was a significant step forward for Pennsylvania to ensure that hate violence perpetrated against our people and communities is not tolerated," said Representative Josh Shapiro, prime sponsor of House Bill 745.

Equality Pennsylvania led member organizations of the Value All Families Coalition in engaging their elected Representatives and advocating for today's vote. Over 50 organizations from across the Commonwealth support hate crime protections for LGBT people, and together this coalition worked tirelessly to see this bill passed. Thousands of letters and e-mails were sent to members of the Judiciary Committee in support of protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Pennsylvanians from all across the Commonwealth.

"Today's vote is a huge step forward for all Pennsylvanians," said Lynn Zeitlin, Executive Director of Equality Pennsylvania. "I look forward to the entire House passing this important legislation to protect all Pennsylvanians from hate violence."

Today's bipartisan vote brings hate crime protections for LGBT Pennsylvanians one step closer.

NY Governor Patterson to Ban Transgender Discrimination

Reports are that NY Gov. David Paterson will sign an executive order banning discrimination against that state's transgender employees.

The governor is expected to sign the order tomorrow morning at the LGBT Community Center in lower Manhattan. Michael Silverman, executive director of the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund, praised the move.

"This executive order will ensure that hard-working transgender employees of New York State can work without fear of discrimination, and provide for themselves and their families," he said. "We applaud Paterson for taking this important step for transgender equal rights."

Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania currently ban discrimination against their public employees based gender identity and expression. The federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act remains stalled in Congress, but Dru Levasseur of Lambda Legal told the New York Times he feels the state will once again be at the forefront of what he described as states "that are taking the lead on workplace fairness."

Lancaster events

2nd Annual Winter Exposition
Thru Jan. 30 - Free
Annex 24 Gallery
West Walnut Street, Lancaster
Over 20 artists - paintings, sculptures, textiles, photography, handcrafted furniture, chainsaw woodcarvings, pottery, jewelry. All budgets.
Thurs & Fri: 11am-6p, Sat: 10am-6pm
Info: 717-341-0028;
http://www.annex24gallery.com

Ice Park at Clipper Magazine Stadium
Thru Feb. 28
Lancaster Barnstormers at Clipper Magazine Stadium

York events

"Fast from the Past: The Racing Motorcycles of Yesteryear"
Runs until 5/1/2010
Antique Auto Museum at Hershey
161 Museum Dr., Hershey
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
www.aacamuseum.org
(717) 566-7100

Taste of York City
2/19/2010
Valencia Ballroom in Downtown York
142 N. George St., York
6-10 p.m., Reservations
$45.00 (General Admission Tickets)
(717)848-9339

Goblets of Fire - Gala & Auction

Inspired by Harry Potter

Join revelers March 13 by raising funds to fight HIV/AIDS at "Goblets of Fire," A GALA and AUCTION inspired by Harry Potter.

Inspired by the Potter series, the AIDS Community Alliance event will transport participants to an enchanted evening at the Civic Club of Harrisburg, the only "house" in Riverfront Park and across from the YMCA on North Front Street. This historic tudor-style mansion offers a picturesque ballroom overlooking the scenic Susquehanna River.

The gala features a menu specially created by Karen's Catering for "Goblets" to reflect the world of Hogwarts. During the course of the gala's festivities the winner of the "Potter World Raffle" will be drawn from out of the Goblet.

The event includes: Heavy Hors d' oeuvres, Wine Bar, String Quartet in the upstairs ballroom, additional chances in the Potter World Raffle (complimentary with ticket purchase and there will be exclusive purchase opportunities that evening), "Raffle-style" auction in which participants purchase raffle tickets to be entered into drawings for auction items rather than placing a dollar bid on individual items.

AIDS Community Alliance (ACA) provides community-based, comprehensive HIV care, housing and education services to individuals, families, and communities impacted by HIV and AIDS. We serve individuals and families throughout south central Pennsylvania. Tickets are $50, $75.

Info: http://aca-pa.kintera.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=332302

Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra Renews Malina

The Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra announced today that the contract of Music Director Stuart Malina has been renewed for five additional years. The popular Maestro, whose current contract expires at the end of the 2009-10 season, is now committed to serve as the Symphony's Music Director through the 2014-15 season. Maestro Malina came to Harrisburg from the Greensboro Symphony at the beginning of the 2000-01 season and currently is celebrating his 10th season as the HSO's artistic leader.

In announcing the news, Board Chairman William Murray stated: "My fellow Board members join me in praising Stuart for the remarkable work he has done here in Harrisburg. His musicianship and versatility and his rapport with audiences have all contributed greatly to our artistic development and growth. We are thrilled to be able to extend our relationship with him for another five years."

Executive Director, Jeff Woodruff, commented: "The Music Director is so critical to the success of the Symphony. This new contract with Stuart is good news for the orchestra. Not only is he a brilliant musician and conductor, he is a pleasure to work with in every way. His inspirational leadership on the podium and his profile in the community will help us immeasurably as we go forward."

Stuart Malina expressed his feelings on the new contract: "I'm honored to have been asked to continue and I very much look forward to building on what has been accomplished over the orchestra's long history. I am energized about the prospect of working with this remarkable group of musicians for another five years. I feel like we've made a lot of progress since I came ten years ago, but there's also a lot of good work yet to be done and a lot more wonderful music that I would like to perform here. I'm eager to get on with it."

Speaking for the musicians, Peter Sirotin, Chair of the Orchestra Committee, stated: "My colleagues and I welcome the extension of Stuart Malina's contract. We share the community's enthusiasm for his musicianship and leadership on the podium. We have the utmost confidence in his ability to carry forward the mission of the orchestra and to build audiences in Harrisburg for symphonic music."

Stuart Malina was born and raised in the New York City area. He earned degrees from both Harvard and Yale Universities, and then went on to study conducting with the esteemed pedagogue, Otto-Werner Mueller, at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Maestro Malina also has impressive credentials as a pianist and performs frequently in the Harrisburg area with Harrisburg Symphony Concertmaster, Odin Rathnam, and other HSO musicians, as well as on the Market Square Concerts Series. Stuart Malina and his wife, Marty, live in Harrisburg with their two children.

The Harrisburg Symphony is currently celebrating its 80th anniversary season. Concerts on both the Masterworks Series and the Capital BlueCross Pops Series continue at the Forum in Harrisburg through May.

Info: www.HarrisburgSymphony.org; 717- 545-5527.

National Wildlife Federation and PennFuture Join Forces

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture), Pennsylvania's leading conservation organization dedicated to protecting and improving Pennsylvania's environment and economy, has been selected as the Pennsylvania affiliate of National Wildlife Federation (NWF). The unanimous decision was made at NWF's Board of Directors meeting this past weekend.

"We are extraordinarily pleased to accept the responsibilities as the Pennsylvania affiliate to the National Wildlife Federation," said Jan Jarrett, president and CEO of PennFuture. "We have long worked to create a network of all the conservation community – anglers, hunters, archers, nature lovers, environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts – to protect and promote Pennsylvania's environment and economy. This partnership with NWF moves us light years forward in building Pennsylvania's conservation movement."

"We are delighted to partner with PennFuture, and welcome them as our 47th state and territorial affiliate," said Larry Schweiger, president of National Wildlife Federation. "PennFuture is a powerhouse organization in Pennsylvania, and our common efforts to restore and protect wildlife and its habitat, combat global warming and connect people with nature make this a natural partnership.

"Conservationists in Pennsylvania know that PennFuture has been crucial to protecting habitat as well as hunting and fishing in the state, with both their advocacy and litigation efforts," Schweiger said.

Working from the premise that "Every environmental victory grows the economy," PennFuture has successfully advocated for landmark environmental legislation, including passage of the largest-ever environmental funding bond, passage of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act, funding for green energy and energy efficiency, and passage of the law requiring a statewide climate change action plan.

Pennsylvania is part of NWF's Chesapeake Mid-Atlantic region, one of nine such regions throughout the United States. Affiliates in each region work together and with partners to advance conservation and protect the region's unique natural treasures. The Mid-Atlantic region includes Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina.

"We already are working with PennFuture to protect and restore Pennsylvania's rivers and streams in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, so we're familiar with their fantastic policy track record," said Tony Caligiuri, NWF Mid-Atlantic regional executive director. "We anticipate that PennFuture will be a great leader in our region-wide efforts to conserve our resources, and to connect Pennsylvania families to nature for generations to come."

"This is terrific news for PennFuture – and even greater news for the environment," said David Lane, chair of the PennFuture Board of Directors. "We hope our affiliation with National Wildlife Federation will increase and expand our ability to make sure that we have plenty of environmental victories growing our economy."

National Wildlife Federation, founded more than 70 years ago, has four million members and supporters nationwide. Affiliate representatives elect the NWF Board of Directors and set the organization's policy objectives in the form of resolutions.

PennFuture was founded in 1998, and has staff in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, West Chester, Doylestown and Wilkes-Barre.

CATS: cont'd

longest continuously touring Broadway musical in history.

On May 11, 1981, CATS opened at the New London Theatre in the West End. Eight years later it celebrated its first important milestone: after 3,358 performances CATS became the longest running musical in the history of British theatre. CATS played its final performance on its 21st birthday, May 11, 2002.

CATS opened on Broadway October 7, 1982 at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City and continued to live up to its motto "Now and Forever." On June 19, 1997, CATS became the longest running musical on Broadway. It ended its 18 year run on September 10, 2000 with 7,485 performances.

Based on T.S. Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, and with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, CATS won seven 1983 Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Best Lighting and Best Costumes.

In October of 1991 CATS became the longest continuously touring show in American theatre history. Five continents, 26 countries, over eight and a half million audience members and 27 years later, CATS is still America's most loved family musical. Celebrating not only 27 years but the birth of the musical spectacular, CATS is still revolutionary and awe inspiring.

Now that it was been seen by millions of audience members worldwide, it is time to celebrate with the whole family the magic, the mystery, the wonder of CATS.

Tickets: $65, $55, $45, and $25 (processing fees apply) at Hershey Theatre Box Office; 717-534-3405; 1-800-745-3000, Ticketmaster.com and HersheyTheatre.com.

LGBT & The Census Count:

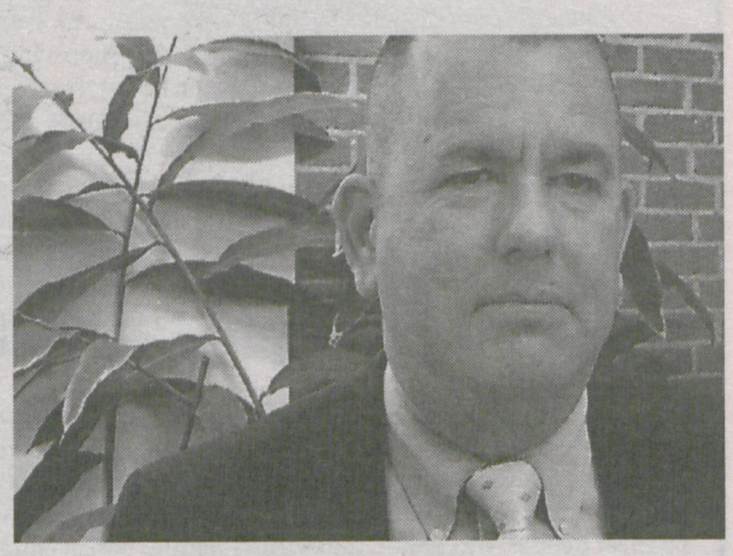
What's New, Why It Matters

By Jennifer Giles

The US Census Bureau and Equality California will co-host the first roundtable discussion in Northern California focusing on how to reach every member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities with the 2010 Census message.

The census doesn't just collect information, it educates people.

The census helps people discover the trends that affect their daily lives. That part of the Census Bureau is called the 2010 Census Partnership and Data Services Program. The man who runs the program for the nation recently paid a visit to the Los Angeles region, says Tim Olson.



Under Olson's direction, the Partnership Program conducts outreach to the many "hard-to-count" or "HTC" populations of the nation. The Census Bureau identifies "hard-to-count" populations in many ways: language barriers, illiteracy, cultural fear or distrust of government. Add to that those who may feel disenfranchised for economic, ethnic or racial reasons. It can be hard to put the form in to the hands of others because they don't always live in the same place: this applies to snowbirds, college students, and people experiencing homelessness, among others.

Among the many "hard-to-count" are the unknown number people in the nation who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Census Partnership outreach staff educate "hard-to-count" people about why we do the Census, and why participation is safe, easy and important to the lives of those they care about. Historically, one of most effective ways to educate people is through community-run groups called Complete Count Committees (CCC's). Although Governments and community groups around the nation have formed over 8000 CCC's on the Census, no CCC's are focused on the LGBT community.

That changed recently. For the first time ever in the nation, LGBT committees on the Census were formed. Olson appeared for the kickoff of the Los Angeles LGBT Complete Count Committee – and called the crowd to action.

"Because this is a historic census for the LGBT community, it's really in our hands to embrace that," he charged, "and to do something with that." He called on LGBT community members to reach out to their friends and family, to talk about why the Census is important, and to urge them to join LGBT complete count committees.

Olsen says that community leaders around the country plan to launch similar grassroots groups on the Census. San Francisco plans a round table discussion and committee launch for October 22. "I know New York is engaged, Philadelphia is engaged, Boston's engaged, Atlanta, Dallas. Around the country this kind of energy is starting to rise. There are 3000 outreach workers throughout the country who are doing the kind of work that Matt [Weinstein] is doing."

Matt Weinstein is the outreach specialist in Los Angeles who works with the LGBT community. The first thing you notice about Matt is how young he is. He's got bright blue eyes and an affable way about him. And what an impressive resume: at 28, Weinstein has organized outreach and political campaign efforts in 8 states. He coordinated the Obama campaign's volunteer operations in two states. "I'm a nice guy, I'm a good guy, but I'm a bureaucrat. The simple fact is, when most people in the Los Angeles LGBT community get their census form in the mail in March, and they are looking at it and trying to figure out how to fill it out –or whether to fill it out—they aren't going to want to hear it from some Bureaucrat. They are going to want to hear it from the people they know the people they know, the people they trust, and the organizations they are involved in. That's why we have complete count committees."

Weinstein organized both the historic LGBT Census committee and the CCC's kickoff event in Los Angeles. He asked that people distribute promotional items and informational materials. He called for groups to post Census information in their newsletters and email blasts. He called for race, ethnicity and language subcommittees within the LGBT Census CCC. He also urged subcommittees by HIV service organizations, LGBT faith groups, and social groups: "anything from athletic groups to dinner groups, to LGBT parenting and play groups. Everyone in the room I'm sure has an email list." Already LGBT groups in other parts of the country have heard about the kickoff of the CCC in LA and have contacted the Census about starting their own LGBT CCC's.

So why would someone want to join a complete count committee?

In short, Census participation leads to money and political power. Population data from the Census is used to determine allocation of 435 seats in the House of Representatives and over $400 billion in federal funding every year –for the next decade. For any particular minority group, Census participation can also lead to visibility.

It's hard to ignore the civil rights of a population when its number is known.

Lorri Jean, CEO of the L.A. Gay and lesbian pointed out that data on from the 2000 census on "unmarried partners living together" showed the nation that gay and lesbian couples were living in 99% of the counties in the nation. And the recognition is paying off. The day before the LGBT Census committee kickoff, her organization was given word it would receive a federal grant to expand its program for the elderly. Over three years, the grant will be worth more than $1 million. "This is the first time in history that the administration on aging has given a grant to an LGBT organization. One of the reasons is that we were able to make some demographic arguments about LGBT seniors."

The census acknowledges the LGBT population by counting couples.

The form counts same-sex couples who are living together, whether they identify themselves as married or as unmarried partners. It doesn't directly ask about sexual orientation of individuals. Gary Gates, the nation's leading LGBT demographer points out, "While counting couples [instead of individuals] sounds like a limitation --and in some ways it is-- it's important to remember that lots of the civil rights issues within the LGBT communities deal with couples. Whether it's relationship recognition, joint-adoption issues, domestic partner benefits or immigration rights: a lot of those issues are about couples rather than individuals, and in that sense, the Census has been an amazing tool."

Changing the way the Census form asks questions takes years.

The format of the form is locked several years before the survey takes place. The forms for 2010 have already begun printing. The process of changing the way the Census asks questions takes time and consideration. Currently, five Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees (REAC) of community leaders advise the Census on decennial issues and policy change recommendations. The Secretary of Commerce determines final Advisory Committee appointments. Currently, five separate race and ethnic committees advise the Census Bureau on decennial issues: the African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Advisory Committees. These REAC committees have been active since 1970, and are very different in purpose from Complete Count Committees. The first advises the Census on issues, the second advises its own community about how the Census affects it.

So what is new in the 2010 Census for the LGBT community?

1) For the first time the Bureau is doing explicit outreach to the LGBT community. Olson gathered 20 of the LGBT outreach specialists from around the country earlier that day for their first strategy session.

2) The formation of LGBT Complete Count Committees on the Census.

3) The 2010 Census will release the data it collects on same-sex partners – both married and unmarried.

4) The Census has launched a study regarding how to change future surveys to get more accurate information on legal marriage, domestic partnership, and unmarried partners.

But what is new is different from what is historic about the 2010 Census for the LGBT communities. The Census first recorded data on lesbian and gay people in relationships in 2000 when it included a relationship box for "unmarried couples living together." In 2000, the contract of

continued on page 29 >

REVIEWS | BOOKS DVDs CDs

Nellie McKay

Nellie McKay gives Doris her due with "Normal As Blueberry Pie - A Tribute To Doris Day (Verve). "Ms. McKay has picked up not just antique musical styles, but also a tone that's even more elusive: arch but amiable, with teeth behind the giggles." Jon Pareles, The New York Times

Agnes

Growing up in the small town of Vänersborg, Sweden, music was always an integral part of Agnes Carlsson's life. Her career took off at the tender age of 17 as the youngest-ever Pop Idol winner (Sweden's "American Idol" counterpart), triggering a string of chart successes in Sweden. "Release Me" was released earlier this summer, and became a pan-European smash before spreading to airwaves around the world, from South Africa to Israel to Australia.

Angie Stone

R&B/soul luminary Angie Stone has never shied away from pushing her own limits and the limits of her music. With each new recording, with each next step in her career, she has consistently hit the world with something it didn't see coming. Same with her new album, Unexpected.

George Michael

George Michael is to release 'Live in London' a special 23 song full concert DVD through Epic Records/ Sony Music Entertainment. This is the first live DVD of George's career.

Timberland

Multi-platinum producer Timbaland releaseed his third solo album, Timbaland Presents Shock Value II. The producer's multi-platinum 2007 album Timbaland Presents Shock Value spawned three No. 1 pop singles, the Grammy-nominated "Give It To Me" (featuring Nelly Furtado and Justin Timberlake), "The Way I Are."

Katharine McPhee

Katharine McPhee warmly laughs as she confesses she's been in "artistic hiding" for the last few years. "It took me a long time to figure out where I wanted to go and be as an artist," she says. "I needed time to learn who I was as a musician." Once she discovered the answer, however, her path was sure and swift with Unbroken, her Verve Records debut.

Rihanna

The wait is ova – for one of the most hotly anticipated new albums in recent history, as multi-platinum, award-winning Def Jam recording artist Rihanna announces the completion of her fourth original studio album, Rated R.

Bobbi Carmitchell & Friends Release New Album

Saying that friends and faithful followers have been asking for a new album, Bobbi Carmitchell recently released 15 songs on a new compilation album.

The talent includes Anne Carmitchell, My Mom, Charlotte, Robin Chamber, Deenie Hamacher, Tammi Hessen, Womack and Lowery, Jessica Smucker, Michele Mercure, Julie Moffitt, Barbara Musselman, Octavia!, and Laurie Reese. The new work includes seven original songs, plus traditional holiday music and songs of winter. Price: $20, limited supply.

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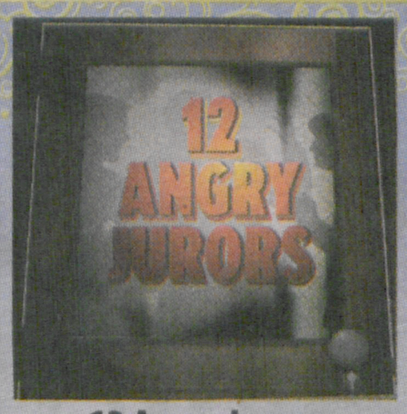

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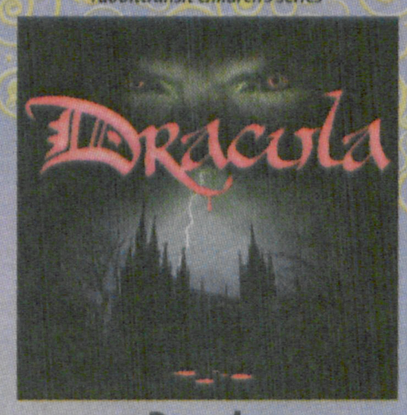

Dracula
February 12-21, 2010
The horror classic tale of dark battle with a terrifying force unleashed upon Victorian England.

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January 30, 2010 • Seatings at 4:30, 6 and 7:30 pm
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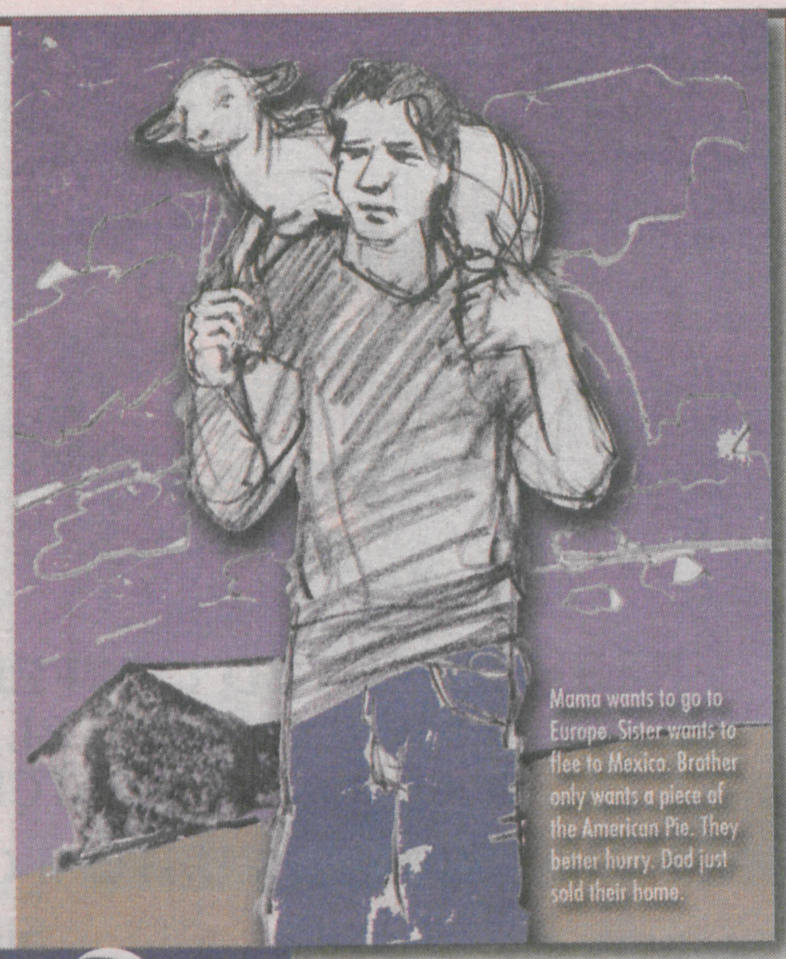
by Sam Shepard

February 5 to 27



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Gallery Blu Hosts Salvation Army Benefit

Conceptualized by Harrisburg artist and resident Jim Woland, Gallery Blu will host a benefit Fri., Feb. 12, 7 p.m. for The Salvation Army in Harrisburg. Music and appetizers included. Just in time for Valentine's Day, Woland and gallery owner Christina Heintzelman-Jones are collaborating to create "Sweet Salvation 100 for $100".

The auction/show opens just in time for Valentine's Day and will feature 100 artists/arts with opening bids of $100. "Our goal is to raise $10,000 for The Salvation Army," says Heintzelman-Jones, adding there at least 40 artists who are contributing art works with more expected to join the effort.

The event reflects Gallery Blu's "Embracing Community through Art" philosophy.

The Show and Silent Auction opens Fri., Feb. 12, 7 p.m. The starting bid for art is $100.

Some art pieces donated are valued at

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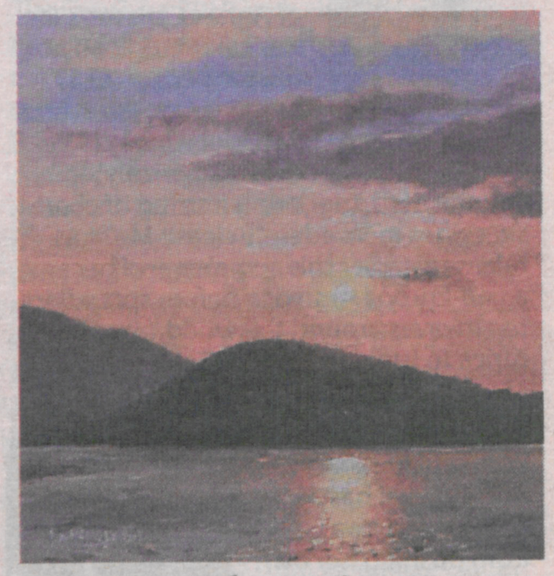
Explorer



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Comedic Legend Lily Tomlin Brings Back Some Old Friends cont'd

ous. Of course, Lucy and Joan Davis."

After high school, Tomlin studied medicine at Wayne State University but her elective theater arts courses compelled her to leave college and become a performer. Relocating to New York City in 1965, she soon built a following on the club circuit at venues like The Improvisation, Cafe Au Go Go and the Upstairs at the Downstairs.

Success soon followed. Tomlin made her television debut in 1966 on "The Garry Moore Show" and then made several appearances on "The Merv Griffin Show." Then sunny, glitzy California beckoned. In 1969, Tomlin joined the cast of the classic sketch comedy show "Laugh-In," and immediately gained national attention, creating characters like Ernestine, the snarky telephone operator, and Edith Ann, the precocious 6-year-old who was always perched in an oversized rocking chair.

Tomlin will perform a number of her classic characters Oct. 23 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Oct 24 at the Borgata Hotel and Spa. Tomlin said that it's hard to pinpoint which of her characters draws the biggest reaction from the audience.

"At the outset, as soon as you become those characters from television or from 'Laugh In' like Ernestine and Edith, [they] are quite recognizable and ready to be received," she said. "I would say they certainly get a big response. There's no question. But there are lots of other pieces and characters where the content causes people to respond just as vocally and raucously. I do Madame Lupe — the oldest living beauty expert. Just doing her is really fun, embodying her is as much fun as anything I do on stage because she's in very advanced years."

After "Laugh-In," Tomlin went on to star in six comedy television specials, which she co-wrote with her partner Jane Wagner. Those shows won her three Emmy Awards and a Writers Guild of America Award.

Variety shows are a rare sight on television these days and audiences are lucky if the see a comedian do anything other than attempt to act or, worse, snag a reality show. Tomlin said she's always envied performers who the Bette Midler who could do it all.

"I always envied people who sang as well because they get airplay," she said. Comedians don't get airplay. They don't offer [variety shows] very much anymore. It's not an era of television specials. My first focus on versatility was to do as many culture types. That's what interested me was to create characters that represented a certain segment of the culture. Over the years, I've done many, many, many characters. And within those I would sing and dance. Not particularly well, but I would do it. I always acted. I've had fewer dramatic roles than I would like to have because people tend to drift toward what the culture identifies you as. I'm fairly versatile too except I'm not really a good singer or dancer. I think I could be trained to sing but I never did it."

Tomlin would go on to further success the 1970s and '80s starring in films like "Nashville," "9 to 5," "The Incredible Shrinking Woman" and "All of Me." In recent years Tomlin has guest starred on a number of television shows, including "Homicide," "The X-Files," "Murphy Brown," "Desperate Housewives" and "Will & Grace," often as characters that are more out there and mischievous than any she has played before.

"I guess when you stop being the lead," Tomlin answered when asked how she gets so many interesting roles on television. "I wasn't on any TV series until I stopped being the lead. 'Murphy' was in the mid-1990s. I wasn't on a series before then. I had broken into the movies in the early 1970s. I wasn't that big of a movie star. I had some nice films I did with co-stars. I did 'Murphy,' then I did 'West Wing.' I'm doing six 'Damages' this year."

The 1990s also saw Tomlin lend her talents to LGBT-themed films. She appeared in the 1993's adaptation of "And the Band Played On" and narrated the 1995 documentary "The Celluloid Closet."

Tomlin said she believes the depictions of gay characters have gotten somewhat better over the years.

"I don't know about movies, but television has certainly improved. There are many lead characters and they're lovable. I don't watch a lot of television. I heard there's a gay couple on 'Modern Life.' Even major stars, it's not beyond them to make a kind of offhanded homophobic remark whether they get it or not. Maybe it's a good sign that it's accepted for the moment in a good way. There's still a threshold of, however high it might be now. It was much lower before. There's still going to be a little separation to exert the manhood factor, even from the hippest people. I'm not saying everyone, but there are people that I like and watch that, every now and then, I see some little crappy thing leak out of there mouths."

She added that despite those occasional and unfortunate backlashes, things are still far better for gays and lesbians inside and outside of the entertainment industry.

"I think there's been tremendous strides made, with women too," she said. "Before I would identify as a lesbian, I identified as a female. It seemed like the greater, more important fight. There's much more consciousness in the culture. People become

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Gallery Blu cont'd

$600 and above. The auctioned pieces will be displayed for two weeks so that everyone has time to get in and bid on a piece of art. There is also a small section of "cash and carry" art that will not be part of the auction. Bidders will be able to take those pieces home that evening.

Watch for a future event involving Gallery Blu and Pride Festival of

Central PA when the gallery will host an exhibit during and around the time of Pride.

Info: www.galleryblu.org; www.galleryblu.blogspot.com; 717-234-3009.

Lady in Red

Sunrise

Tortie

Gay Ballot Measures Since '72:

102 Losses, 23 Wins

By Michael Petrelis
Central Voice SF Correspondent

From the NY Times obit after William F. Buckley Jr died: To the New York City politician Mark Green, he purred: "You've been on the show [Firing Line] close to 100 times over the years. Tell me, Mark, have you learned anything yet?"

Michael Petrelis
Photo by: Rick Gerharter

This amusing anecdote sprang to mind after I compiled a list of all winning and losing ballot propositions over the decades related to gay people. Leave to conservative Buckley to sting an opponent into spirited debate, with a simple question, one that expresses what I want to ask my gay community.

Information from three lists shows gay people have suffered 102 losses and 23 wins since 1972 through the ballot initiative process. The recent setback in Maine became our 102nd loss. That is some string of failures for the sissies. Triple digits losses over forty years, and I ask, have we learned anything yet?

I took data from this list published by a straight University of Kansas professor, Don Haider-Markel, and also from this Wikipedia entry on lgbt ballot initiatives, along with info at the Wikipedia entry on gay marriage measures, and tallied up wins and losses.

Last week I was upset when Maine became the 31st gay marriage prop loss, but I didn't know the larger context of all gay-specific props, and it's even more disturbing to have to wrap my head around the total figure of 102 ballot measure losses.

Like a screaming queen at the Stonewall Inn riot and rebellion, I'm fed up with being treated like dirt by the establishment, and the Mr. Nice Gay leadership that produces endless ballot box bashings damaging our collective psyche and community karma.

Let's not forget the high price of the campaigns, sucking up money that could go to better use like housing subsidies for gay/bisexual/lesbian/transgender seniors. How many millions are we talking about? David Mixner has part of the answer: We have poured over $100,000,000 in the last two years into efforts where Americans feel it is there obligation to vote on our freedom.

One-hundred million in just two years and I shudder to think of the cost to the gay community pocketbook after "decades" of these ballot props.

How much higher than 102 failures must our losses number climb to before things change? Much higher, with the thinking expressed by a man whose career is working on these losing campaigns. From a recent Washington Post article: Advocates say there was a partial victory even in Maine, where the vote was closer than it had been in previous campaigns. "We're hopeful that it's a signal that there is increasing support for gay couples to marry," said Dan Hawes, field director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "Nationally, we're going to continue education efforts to move the needle of public opinion, especially in California."

Sorry, Dan Hawes, and the rest of the Gay Inc. folks who have without question helped create 102 setbacks, with so many gay millions down the toilet. It no longer is good enough change to simply move the needle a hair.

Source: Professor Don Haider-Markel, University of Kansas, http://people.ku.edu/~dhmarkel/ballot

Michael Petrelis reports stories the mainstream media choose to ignore. Michael has appeared on The O'Reilly Factor, CNN, ABC News, and National Public Radio. He has been quoted by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Raw Story, The Chicago Tribune, The New Republic, and Stars & Stripes.

Lily Tomlin cont'd

entertainers because they develop an antenna or sensitivity to the culture. Maybe not enough that would please me or you, but they do. They have to be an entertainer from someplace of their own empathy. Some people empathize more pervasively, deeply and widely. But still, to get ahead in the culture you have to at least keep up with the culture. So they're putting more of that out. And the fight … I've marveled at what the gay community has done in the last 40 years since Stonewall. I was just talking to Bruce Vilanch the other night and comparing Martin Luther King Jr. to Obama in roughly the same 40 years. Even though it riles up more of the opposition, Obama's election has caused all these more-radically prejudiced groups to rear their heads. I suppose it does the same thing to progress. When people are frightened and narrow-minded, when they see what looks like hordes of people they fear marching toward them, they're going to make their last gasp. I've marveled at the gay movement coming up myself from the 1950s. I wasn't even particularly fearful but I was a product of my culture."

Tomlin has been with Jane Wagner since the early 1970s but she explained that, while she never made an effort to hide her relationship or sexual orientation, it was something the press at the time wasn't overly eager to put in the spotlight.

"People wouldn't write about it, even into the 1970s," she said. "When I was on the cover of Time in 1977, particularly in the business and journalists, my relationship with Jane was no secret. Very often we'd be doing interviews together. She's be sitting in the room. When I was interviewed with Time, we were always together because they'd come to your house and you'd go all kinds of places together. I almost got the Newsweek cover at the same time, which used to be a P.R. coup. I think Liza [Minnelli] did it once. At the last minute they found out that I was on Time and they quickly replaced the cover with Andrew Young or someone. But they still had a big story on me. The Time cover said I lived or shared a house with writer Jane Wagner. They said no more. Newsweek said I lived alone. No one had put any parameters on them. That's how it was done in those days, especially if you were a legitimate performer or actor. Nobody was out to out you. They were much more discreet. Maybe in the '80s, they started outing politicians. They became unbridled in reporting as much as they could."

In the current era of over-exposed celebrities, it's nice to know that talent trumps orientation.

Larry Nichols can be reached at larry@epgn.com.

LGBT & The Census cont'd

marriage between two people of the same sex didn't yet exist legally. Same-sex couples who indicated they were married in 2000 were counted as unmarried partners – in accordance with the Defense of Marriage Act. The Census Bureau recently announced a policy change. When gay and lesbian couples indicate that they are married on the 2010 form, the Census will count them as married. This makes the Census the first Federal agency to recognize same sex marriage. And that is historic.

During the kickoff event, the regional director of Census operations, Mr. James Christy called attention to another historic moment in history. "The evolution of census questions gives us insight in to who we are as a nation. And usually the census lags behind society."

There was a time when the Constitution considered people of color – slaves in particular – as just 3/5 of a person for the Census. "We hear that now and it seems unconscionable to us. I mean - - it just seems crazy. Then the 14th Amendment came and changed that."

As Christy discussed the nation's civil rights history, he said he sees this as a very historic moment in time. He tells the audience that by participating, "You are a part of history." He says that the unprecedented LGBT outreach "is something that two years ago, was inconceivable at the Census Bureau."

"It's truly a remarkable event for us as an agency. But I think it's an even more remarkable event for us as a country."

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OUT OF TOWN
by Andrew Collins

Guadalajara MEXICO

Mexico's second-largest city, Guadalajara, delivers much of what visitors genuinely seek when visiting this country: mariachi and folk-music culture, fine tequila, authentic arts and crafts, superb regional cuisine, restored Spanish Colonial architecture, and overwhelming friendly and engaging people. What you may not know is that Guadalajara is home to a well-established, energetic and welcoming gay and lesbian scene. From quaint, gay-friendly B&Bs to wildly popular dance clubs, this festive city has much to offer LGBT visitors, hence it's having lately earned the nickname, "San Francisco of Mexico."

Guadalajara lies at the heart of the state of Jalisco, the state in which most of Mexico's tequila is produced. It's situated at an altitude of about 5,000 feet and is just a short flight or half-day bus ride from the country's most popular gay beach destination, Puerto Vallarta, as well as the Spanish Colonial cities of Guanajuato and San Miguel de Allende, and the national capital of Mexico City.

Although 1.5 million people live within the city limits and nearly 5 million people reside in the metro region, Guadalajara feels more laid-back and manageable than most cities its size. The metro area rolls out west from the city center to the upscale and quite modern business district, where you'll find large international hotels and a smattering of office towers, and also to the east, which is home to the quaint arts villages of Tonala and - most famously - Tlaquepaque. To the immediate northwest, historic Zapopan is another community rife with galleries and restaurants.

It's a relatively easy city to drive in (assuming you're generally comfortable renting cars in other countries), and a car does allow a deeper exploration of the surrounding Jalisco. But Guadalajara is also served by an extremely affordable and generally quite safe fleet of taxis (it's nevertheless best to have your hotel or restaurant phone for a cab, and also to agree upon the fare before you get in). Most gay nightlife and B&Bs are located in the Centro (downtown area) and adjacent Zona Rosa, which is easy to navigate on foot - just exercise the usual common-sense precautions (avoid walking alone at night and along quiet side streets).

The major sights of interest here can be divided roughly into two categories: those located within the historic city center,

and those that require longer forays by taxi or tour group. Within the city center, head for the centrally located, rectangular Plaza Tapatio (residents of Guadalajara, by the way, are known as Tapatios). Facing or very near this plaza you'll find such landmarks as the enormous 16th-century cathedral, the excellent Museo Regional de Guadalajara and the famed neoclassical opera house, Teatro Degollado. At the plaza's east end, be absolutely sure to stop by Instituto Cultural Cabanas, a former orphanage comprising numerous grand courtyards and housing astoundingly beautiful (and enormous) ceiling and wall murals by Jose Clemente Orozco.

Outside downtown, the nearby town of Tlaquepaque is a must - it's about 20 minutes away by taxi. Stroll along the city center, and especially on Independencia, which is lined with galleries selling fine crafts, artwork, antiques and home furnishings - styles range from traditional to contemporary, but quality is consistently good. There are several noted restaurants here, too. Also consider a visit to nearby Tonala, which has long been renowned as a center of traditional Mexican pottery.

Additionally, few visitors to this part of the world pass up the chance to explore the town of Tequila, where the liquor of the same name is distilled at dozens of distilleries, including famous ones like Jose Cuervo and Sauza. You can take a taxi out here, or book a trip through a tour company - hotel staff and innkeepers can easily help you plan a visit.

Tapatios approach dining with style and gusto. Some notable spots for higher-end, creative cuisine include Cocina 88, renowned for its fresh seafood and on-site wine store, and La Matera, a bustling Argentinean and Italian restaurant with an attractive patio - steaks are an obvious specialty here. You can also savor some wonderfully prepared meals at Escuela Culinaria Internacional, a renowned cooking school with a restaurant as well as cooking classes open to the public. A 10-minute walk north of the main gay nightlife strip in Centro Historico, Vida is a friendly and cheery LGBT cafe that's ideal for coffee, light snacks and conversation.

In Tlaquepaque, the dining scene is focused mostly along Independencia. Here you might try Hacienda Real San Pedro or Casa Fuerte, which both serve exceptionally tasty and creative modern Mexican fare. Around the plaza that Independencia leads into, you'll also find dozens of street vendors selling cakes, tacos al pastor (tasty shepherd's-style tacos filled with shaved lamb, pork, or goat meat), tortas (traditional Mexican sandwiches served on delicious crusty bread), churros (fried dough), and frozen ices (ice cream sold out of long metal tubes and flavored with vanilla, walnut, and fruit).

The majority of Guadalajara's gay and lesbian bars are in Centro, many along busy Avenida Prisciliano Sanchez. Here you'll find one of the most popular gay discos in the city, Circus Club, which especially packs them in on Friday nights. Also considering stopping by casual but hip Club YeYe, a friendly lounge drawing a mixed crowd of women and men and the campy Ruta Caudillos disco.

A short cab ride west, in the more fashionable Zona Rosa, there's Angel's, a long-running popular disco (especially after-hours on Saturday nights and well into Sunday mornings). And still a bit farther west (take a taxi), the most stylish gay club in the city (and one of the nicest in Mexico) is Black Cherry, a capacious warehouse club with two big dance floors, a small patio and a highly sophisticated sound system. The owners of Circus and Black Cherry also run a more laid-back, mixed gay/straight bar and lounge in Zona Rosa called Link that

continued on next page >

Out of Town cont'd

cultivates a mellower vibe, its DJs spinning trance and chill-out music. Also, although it's a 10-minute cab ride east of Plaza Tapatia, Monica's Disco has for years been a favorite place to dance and watch drag shows.

Guadalajara has great many gay-friendly accommodations. Of particular note are the several smaller, historic inns around the city, the cushiest being Villa Ganz, which occupies a handsome historic home along a smart residential block in Zona Rosa and contains a handful of stunningly appointed suites. In back you'll find a glorious courtyard and garden, where Continental breakfast and evening snacks and wine are served.

Other inviting but more reasonably priced small inns around the City Center include a gay-owned, Moorish-inspired mansion called La Perla that has artfully decorated rooms and the beautifully restored Old Guadalajara B&B, which has four large suites decorated with old-world antiques. The building occupies part of what was a convent during the 16th century.

One interesting, highly affordable choice aimed squarely at the gay-male market is Hotel Lit, which is close to Centro gay nightlife and offers a mix of private and shared rooms, the cheapest of which cost around $15 per night. This new and nicely run property is basically a hostel with something of the vibe you might find at a gay sauna (massage service is available, and free passes are available to a nearby gym). There's Wi-Fi and a computer terminal, and guests have use of a fully equipped kitchen.

Larger mainstream properties of note include the posh Presidente InterContinental Guadalajara, which is right across the street from a large outdoor shopping mall and within walking distance of the famed gay club, Black Cherry. Right in the city center, the historic Hotel Morales captures the rich charm of the city center. It's an easy walk to gay bars, and it's home to a beautiful lobby bar - if nothing else, stop in for a drink in the early evening and soak up the charm of this grand old building and the surrounding historic area.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

The Little Black Book

- Angels Club (www.myspace.com/angelsclub)
- Black Cherry (www.blackcherry.com.mx)
- Casa Fuerte (www.casafuerte.com)
- Circus Club (www.grupocircus.com/web/circus/el"club.htm)
- Club YeYe (www.antrosgay.com/Jalisco/Guadalajara/Antro"Gay"Guadalajara"Club"Ye"Ye.html)
- Cocina 88 (www.cocina88.com/conocenos.swf)
- Hotel Lit (www.hostellitgdl.com)
- Hotel Morales (www.hotelmorales.com.mx)
- La Matera (www.lamatera.tripod.com)
- La Perla (www.laperlagdl.com)
- Link (www.grupocircus.com/web/link/el"bar.htm)
- Monica's Disco (www.monicasdisco.com)
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- Presidente InterContinental Guadalajara (www.ichotelsgroup.com/intercontinental/en/gb/locations/guadalajara)
- Ruta Caudillos (www.rutacaudillos.com)
- Tourism Guadalajara (http://vive.guadalajara.gob.mx/indexi.asp)
- Tourism Tequila (www.tequilajalisco.gob.mx/menui.html)
- Villa Ganz (www.villaganz.com)

Queen of Winter Hearts Ball Feb. 20

Benefitting the LGBT Community Center and featuring headline artist Kaci Battaglia, the Queen of Winter Hearts Ball takes place Feb. 20., time TBA at York's Club XS. After a fierce competition for the title "Queen of Winter Hearts," a winner will be presented to her people and crowned Queen.

The celebration continues with headline artist Kaci Battaglia, who is fast becoming an international star with a large lgbt fan base. Her latest single "Crazy Possessive," was released last May and outperformed groups like Black Eyed Peas and Eminem on iTunes.

All funds raised from the Queen of Winter Hearts Contest and the Feb. 20 Ball benefit the LGBT Community Center. Information, details, or to compete in the contest, contact Sean Maloney at the LGBT Community Center, smaloney@centralpalgbtcenter.org or (717) 920-9534.

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Rainbow Pride Rural Project

This project intends to create support for the GLBT community living in rural York, Juniata, Mifflin and Perry Counties. It is funded by the Foundation for Enhancing Communities and housed within Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit located in uptown Harrisburg, Pa.
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Contact: Kevin E. Burrell
Wheelchair Accessible: Yes
Email: kevinb2004@msn.com

Students Advocating LGBTA Equality

Shippensburg University Cumberland Union Building
Box 89
Shippensburg, Pa 17265
Phone: 717-477-1616
Contact: Travis Eichelberger
Wheelchair Accessible: No information available
Email: susale@gmail.com
Website: www.ship.edu/~msa/SALE.htm

Susquehanna Club

Group camping open to LGBT people and their friends.
Wheelchair Accessible: No information available
Email: camp@susq.org
Website: www.susq.org

Susquehanna Valley Bears

PO Box 11, Manchester, PA 17345
Contact: Matt S.
Wheelchair Accessible: No Information Available
Email: daddyscrub@comcast.net
Website: www.svbears.com

The Pennsmen, Inc

The Pennsmen, Inc are Central PA's glbt leather/levi/kink social organization. Membership is open to anyone over the age of 21 with an interest in the lifestyle. Meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month at the Neptune Lounge @ 3:00pm
PO Box 401
HARRISBURG, PA 17108-0401
Phone: 717-232-3785
Contact: Steven James
Wheelchair Accessible: No information available
Hours: Evenings
Email: pennsmen@pennsmen.org
Website: www.pennsmen.org

The Rainbow Bowling League

The Rainbow Bowling League bowls every Thursday at 8:55 p.m. We bowl out of the ABC East Lanes on Eisenhower Blvd in Harrisburg and are considered a "mixed" league: in other words, both men and women are welcome. We would like to invite anyone interested in joining or you have friends that are interested in bowling on Thursday evenings. Call for more details. Openings for individual bowlers, teams and substitutes.
Phone: 763-8444
Contact: Mark or Robert
Wheelchair Accessible: No information available
Hours: Thursday 8:45 P.M.

Women's Circle

c/o Bobbi Carmitchell
Locust Lane Music, P.O. Box 8301
Lancaster, Pa 17604
Phone: 717.872.4512
Contact: Bobbi Carmitchell
Wheelchair Accessible: No information available
Email: bobbi@womenscircle.org
Website: www.womenscircle.org

Bebe Zahara Benet, Logo's 'RuPaul's Drag Race' Winner, Debuts Music Video

"RuPaul's Drag Race", is about to prove why she deserves the crown of "America's Next Drag Superstar." The music video for her debut single, "I'm the Sh*t" recently premiered on Logo.

"I am thrilled the Logo network is strongly supporting the release of my first single," said Benet from her new home in New York City. "I'm the Sh*t is an empowering song that encourages self-worth. We are all The Sh*t in our own unique way. We only need to discover our fabulousness and release it so that everyone can appreciate it."

The music video is being compared to RuPaul's 1993 break-out music video, "Supermodel (You Better Work)". Similar to how RuPaul's song parodied the model craze of the nineties, "I'm the Sh*t" lampoons the current craze of extreme make-overs.

"Of course I'm honored by the comparison," continued Benet, "but I would never try to duplicate the legendary RuPaul. Those would be very big stilettos to fill." Benet – whose legal name is Nea Marshall Kudi – was raised in Cameroon and worked in France as a male runway model before moving to the United States.

His alter ego is the product of an inspirational moment during a fashion show, when some of the female models failed to appear. Kudi was asked to step in as a female. Identifying the opportunity as a chance to creatively channel that inspiration, Bebe Zahara Benet was born.

RuPaul presented the "America's Next Drag Superstar" crown to Benet on the season finale of the Logo competition show, "RuPaul's Drag Race". In addition to the crown, Benet was awarded a feature photo spread in Paper magazine; a portrait taken by renowned photographer Greg Gorman for the l.a. Eyeworks campaign; a headlining spot on the Absolut Pride Tour; and $20,000 in cash.

"Winning the race has not changed me; I'm still the same person I was before the win," says Benet. "But I will say that I am blessed to see that my persona inspires a lot of people who find a connection with [BeBe], and as an artist, that's huge – even money can't buy that. As for my career, this is a stepping stone to take my artistry to the next level, and I'm thankful for all the opportunities that have come my way and those that are still to come."

See music video at thecentralvoice.ning.com

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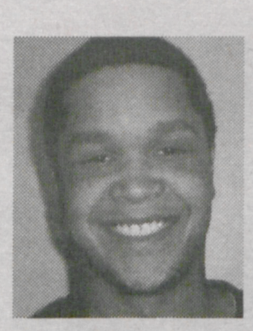
M4M: Find a Gay-friendly Doctor for 2010



By Steven Palmer

Here's an idea for a New Year's resolution that involves less sacrifice and suffering than most: Find yourself a gay-friendly personal physician.

Hopefully, you already have one. Then again, maybe you'd rather talk to your Aunt Ruth again about whether or not you're "saved" than talk to your doctor about your - you know - "personal business."

Which is too bad, because the simple fact is that some health issues just have a greater impact on gay men. One of those is STIs (sexually transmitted infections that used to be called sexually transmitted disease). So if you don't have a private doc who's looking out for you, you're just going to have to rely once again on the man in the mirror.

The good news is that we know something about what's affecting gay men and what can be done about it. We know that syphilis, once seemingly relegated to biographies of 19th century philosophers, has been making an unwelcome comeback.

We know that gonorrhea and chlamydia are to sexually active gay men what Kudzu is to Savannah landscaping. We know that latex condoms, which were not available in time to protect 19th century philosophers, greatly reduce the risk of getting these and other STIs, including HIV.

On the testing front, the news is less good. Gay guys aren't getting checked as frequently as they have in the past. Some guys are tired of messages about sexual health, especially when they make having sex seem like planning a polar expedition. This is where an astute personal physician can make a difference by knowing which tests to recommend and how to perform them (if she doesn't know you're gay, she probably won't swab the right places when testing for gonorrhea, for example).

Part of the problem, too, is the tests themselves. The new testing technology, like NAAT (nucleic acid amplification testing) works great when it comes to detecting gonorrhea and chlamydia, but the FDA has only approved it for testing genital samples, not throat or rectal ones (though it seems to work well for those areas, too). So if you're having oral or anal sex (show of hands), you can't take full advantage of NAAT – yet. All the more reason to talk to your doctor and inform yourself about maximizing your options for getting and staying healthy.

Like a regular HIV test for sexually active gay men, STI testing should be a part of ho-hum routine health care. No biggie. No harm, no foul. Like using the drive thru at – well, you get the idea. It's not that having an STI is going to kill you, or even rot your Johnson off (though it could explain why he's slow to come to attention). But STIs can set you up for also getting HIV, and some, like syphilis, have some pretty nasty consequences if left untreated (think how bad some of that 19th century philosophy was that you had to read in college). For most STIs, treatment is a breeze by comparison.

Ultimately, it comes down to taking care of yourself generally, because, well, you're basically a good person and worthy of care and respect, right?. So go ahead, respect yourself.

Contact: Steven Palmer @ steven@aca-pa.com; 717-233-7190. M4M is a component of AIDS Community Alliance.

Outing Age 2010 Report Spotlights Aging LGBT Community

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) has jointly released Outing Age 2010: Public Policy Issues Affecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Elders, an update to the groundbreaking Outing Age report issued in 2000.

Like its predecessor, Outing Age 2010 presents an in-depth look at public policy issues and challenges facing millions of aging LGBT people in the United States.

The updated report comes on the heels of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius' recent announcement of plans to establish the first national LGBT elder resource center. LGBT aging issues have been a focus of the New Beginning Initiative, a Task Force-coordinated collaboration of more than 20 national LGBT organizations moving to promote change within federal agencies to improve the lives of LGBT people. LGBT aging issues have been identified as a priority issue for the Task Force and SAGE.

"For too many years, the needs of the oldest members of our community have been invisible to many of us and ignored by most institutions in our society," says Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "LGBT elders remain a highly vulnerable and largely invisible aging population. We know that invisibility leads to greater social isolation, which can lead to increased vulnerability in many areas. We also know that discrimination across the lifespan leaves LGBT people economically and socially vulnerable as they age. Outing Age 2010 shines a laser beam on these needs and offers concrete recommendations on how aging advocates, policy makers and social service agencies can meet them."

The LGBT elder population is growing, with a large wave of openly LGBT baby boomers poised to seek aging-related services over the next 25 years. Yet, as Outing Age 2010 shows, there is virtually no government-sponsored research on aging that includes sexual orientation or gender identity variables. This lack of data results in policy and practices that ignore the unique realities and needs of older LGBT people.

"While we have seen a growing network of LGBT aging programs and some positive steps by mainstream aging services programs to welcome LGBT older adults, there still is a long way to go in terms of public policy, capacity-building and appropriate funding to adequately address the concerns of LGBT older adults," says SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams. "The recent announcement about the creation of a national technical assistance resource center on LGBT aging will make a big difference, especially with regard to building capacity to serve LGBT older people nationwide. Outing Age 2010 is a key resource for the LGBT aging network, and a roadmap for aging advocates seeking policy progress."

Outing Age 2010 includes an overview and current research on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the demographics of the LGBT older adult community to the issues facing this population, including challenges in health care, housing, assisted-living services, social services, home care and many others.

The report shows that several federal programs that aim to serve elders blatantly exclude or otherwise discriminate against LGBT elders. For example, Social Security pays survivor benefits to widows and widowers but not to surviving spouses of same-sex life partners. Medicaid regulations protect the assets and homes of married spouses but offer no such protection to same-sex partners. Tax laws discriminate against same-sex partners, costing the surviving partner thousands of dollars a year. In addition, the report spotlights the continuing widespread existence of bias in the provision of services to LGBT elders.

Report findings include:

• Research on LGBT people at the federal and state levels is almost nonexistent, and so the specific needs of LGBT elders remain largely invisible and unaddressed.

• Federal, state and local elder housing and care programs, Area Agencies on Aging, and other providers have no mandate to provide culturally competent services to LGBT people, while elders report widespread fear, discrimination and barriers to care.

• Federal "safety net" programs like Social Security and Medicaid define family and partnership in ways that exclude LGBT families, partners and spouses, creating economic and familial hardships for LGBT elders.

• Significant health disparities persist, with no federal commitment to identifying or addressing them.

• With no federal prohibition against anti-LGBT workplace discrimination, income inequities across the lifespan persist for LGBT wage earners.

Policy recommendations include:

• The federal government and the states must fund and include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in all research surveys.

• The Administration on Aging should issue guidelines to the states to include LGBT elders as a vulnerable population and provide directives for active outreach to and inclusion of LGBT elders in state plans.

• Federal and state bans on employment discrimination must be established to prevent LGBT elder poverty.

• The definition of family must be expanded to recognize same-sex couples and extended family kinship structures in the designation of federal benefits such as Social Security, Medicaid and Veterans Benefits.

• The Family and Medical Leave Act must be expanded to cover LGBT caregivers and their family and friends, regardless of whether they are related by blood or marriage.

• Public and private health care providers must be trained in cultural competency for working with LGBT older adults.

Outing Age 2010 also notes two key impending areas of focus for LGBT aging advocates: the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act in 2011 and the White House Conference on Aging, slated for 2015.

SAGE Commends Policy on HIV Screening

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE) commends the announcement by The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that the agency will cover Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection screening for Medicare beneficiaries at increased risk for infection, including Medicare beneficiaries of any age who voluntarily request the service.

Michael Adams, SAGE executive director said "This decision will promote more HIV screening by vulnerable populations, including older adults and will save lives." Approximately 29% of people with HIV and AIDS are over the age of 50 and 10-15% of new diagnoses are also in people over the age of 50. Despite those figures, a 2006 CDC study found that adults 65 and older had the lowest HIV testing rates 11.4%, compared to 53.3% of adults 25-34.

Testing and infection rates in older adults have been virtually ignored in the United States, as have prevention and education messages targeting older adults. "We will continue this work by advocating that CDC remove its age-cap for routine testing, which currently guidelines recommending that all individuals between 13 and 64 years of age be screened for HIV regardless of recognized risk factors," Adams said. "We believe there is no reason to cap the age at 64, and that routine HIV screening happen throughout the course of an adult's life."

SAGE is the world's oldest and largest non-profit agency dedicated to serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors. Since its inception, SAGE has pioneered programs and services for seniors in the LGBT community, provided technical assistance and training to expand opportunities for LGBT older people across the country, and provided a national voice on LGBT aging issues. In 2005 SAGE became the first official LGBT delegate at a White House Conference on Aging, and is now the first organization to represent LGBT issues on the Leadership Council on Aging. SAGE celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2008 and is continuing to advocate for LGBT elders.

Information: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecisionmemo.asp?id=229; www.sageusa.com.

Pastor Rick Warren Speaks Out Against Antigay Ugandan Law

In response to speculation he supports a proposed Ugandan bill to further criminalize homosexuality in the East African country, Pastor Rick Warren, founder of the California's Evangelical Saddleback Church, has issued a letter and video statement to Ugandan church leaders calling the bill "unjust, extreme and un-Christian toward homosexuals."

Warren has been heavily involved in Ugandan religion and politics. His response comes after media criticism that he did not respond to the bill sooner and that his teachings against homosexuality might have influenced Ugandan leaders to draft the bill in the first place.

Reportedly, in addition to punishing anyone convicted of performing homosexual acts with life imprisonment, the bill mandates the death penalty if the accused person is HIV positive, a repeat offender, a "person of authority" over the other partner or if the partner is younger than 18. All citizens would be required to report any known homosexual to the police within 24 hours or risk three years in jail.

"As a pastor, I've found that the most effective way to build consensus for social change is usually through direct diplomacy and behind-the-scenes dialogue, rather than through media," said Warren, who, along with his wife Kay, heads Saddleback's HIV/AIDS Initiative. "But because I didn't rush to make a public statement, some erroneously concluded that I supported this terrible bill, and some even claimed I was a sponsor of the bill. You in Uganda know that is untrue."

While he maintains his traditional evangelical views on homosexuality in the video, claiming "all sex outside of marriage is not what God intends" and "Jesus reaffirmed what Moses wrote that marriage is intended to be between one man and one woman committed to each other for life," he urges Ugandan church leaders to reject this proposed legislation.

"As you know, in Africa, it is the churches that are bearing the primary burden of providing care for people infected with HIV/AIDS," Warren says. "If this bill passed, homosexuals who are HIV positive will be reluctant to seek or receive care, comfort and compassion from our churches out of fear of being reported. You and I know that the churches of Uganda are the truly caring communities where people receive hope and help, not condemnation."

He adds, "It would be inconsistent to save some lives and wish death on others. We're not just pro-life. We are whole life."

Originally posted on thecentralvoice.ning.com Dec. 11, 2009, see video clip

Violinist David Garrett Returns March 30

Following an amazing sold-out show last fall, Whitaker Center welcomes the return of internationally acclaimed violinist David Garrett March 30, 7 p.m., for an encore performance in Harrisburg. He returns in March to play Whitaker Center Presents at the Forum.

Combining years of classical music training with mainstream pop and rock music - Garrett's performances pay unique and equal homage to Metallica and Mozart. His daring journey from classical prodigy to a mature and highly adventurous artist has been personally fulfilling, and also resonates with enormous worldwide acclaim.

Already a huge star in Europe and throughout the Far East, Garrett performs nightly to thousands of adoring fans. On the famous Last Night of the Proms in the U.K., Garrett played to a crowd of 40,000 people, and also appeared at the legendary Royal Albert Hall - performing an impressive six concerts in seven days.

Garrett is currently set to conquer a whole new terrain with his first U.S. self-titled release. Aside from being a world-renowned violinist, Garrett is also a global brand ambassador for the clothing company Banana Republic, and has additional endorsements overseas. Dubbed, "the fastest violinist in the world," by German paper Kolner Stadt-Anzeigere, the incredible violinist will be in the 2010 Guinness Book of World Records, as the fastest-ever performer of the Flight of the Bumblebee, clocking in at a blistering 66 seconds.

Fans can access his website at: http://www.david-garrett.com. Tickets: $32.50, $40; whitakercenter.org; 717/214-ARTS.

D.C. City Council Passes Marriage Bill

D.C. City Council Dec. 15 voted for the second time as a full council in favor of the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009. The bill will formally legalize marriage for gay and lesbian couples in the District while protecting the rights of religious institutions to define marriage according to their own beliefs.

The bill is expected to be signed by Mayor Adrian M. Fenty. Final approval rests with Congress which must review the measure before it becomes law.

Aisha Mills, president of the Campaign for All D.C. Families, said "This is a historic day for the District of Columbia. Equality for all DC residents has prevailed. The Council's decision today embodies the true essence of leadership. Thanks to their bold work, all DC families will have the same protections, opportunities and obligations under the law.

"Campaign for All DC Families applauds our City Council and the community leaders who have worked tirelessly for decades in the pursuit of equality for all DC families. Their unwavering commitment to fairness and equal rights for all loving, committed couples has brought us to this moment," Mills said.

"But as we celebrate today, we are reminded that our work toward equality and social justice is not yet complete. We must remain vigilant to ensure that the Congress lets this law stand, and that our equality is not put to a vote in the district," Mills concluded.

Lesbian Rabbi Attends White House Hannukah

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, the world's largest synagogue for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, was presented Dec. 16 at the White House Hannukah reception by its Senior Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum. The invitation came from Mrs. Obama to attend.

"I am delighted to represent the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and queer communities at the White House in celebrating this holiday of freedom and liberation with President and Mrs. Obama, Rabbi Kleinbaum said.

"The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community knows what it is to fight for equality and freedom and we are looking to President Obama to exercise leadership in this struggle. I am honored to be included," Kleinbaum said.

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah is committed to the idea that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Jews are wholly legitimate members of the Jewish people, are equally legitimate members of civil society, and have a unique and essential contribution to make to the life of Judaism and society. It is this commitment to social justice and gender equality that has also attracted straight and even non-Jewish adults to our community. Founded in 1973 by forward thinking gay Jews, and currently led by Senior Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen, CBST is the largest lgbt synagogue in the world.

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